KASHMIR: The Undeniable Truth

A Social and Political Analysis of Kashmir



Hashim Qureshi

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THE UNDENIABLE TRUTH

A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF KASHMIR

BY

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JK DEMOCRATIC LIBERATON PARTY

Iqra Publication Srinagar Kashmir

ISBN:978-81-909461-2-4

Published by Iqra Publications
Yemburzal Mall,Court Road,
Srinagar-Kashmir
Tele:0194-2456786

Cover Design: Mohd Javed
Composed: Abrar Qureshi, Laila Qureshi and Sana Qureshi

Price Rs 350/-

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With Great Respect & Love
To. Comrad Krishen Sethi Sahib.
From
30.11.2010.

"He who listens to truth is not less then he who utters the truth"

Khalil Gibran

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FOREWORD

Moulana Ahmad Khazir

It is hard to face realities and speak truth. The history of mankind is full of perplexity and mystification. Success and failure, losing and wining is the law of nature but every one has reason and justification for triumph and trail. In every sphere of life we are involved in a race but unfortunately in Kashmir we are trudging an endless track .Most of Kashmiries blame India and Pakistan for the volatility and political instability in the state and feel alienated due to the bias attitude of diplomacy as well as politics. But what ever may be the reasons! The fact is that Kashmiri Leadership is responsible for the uproar and mayhem .

The fundamental and flagrant contradictions that occur in the manifestos of all political groups and parties in Kashmir have pushed kashmiries in such a situation where all the intellectuals, writers, think tanks and even political leaders are unable to think of a solution to Kashmir imbroglio.

Every one is talking of solution and resolution of this vexed problem but it is truly difficult in Kashmir to call spade a spade .If you dare to become honest and speak truth you will be labeled either Indian agent or Pakistani agent and you are no more Kashmiri? Resulting in the causality of truth and facts.

Mr.Hashim Qureshi is also one of causalities of truth. He dares to speak truth and it is hard to swallow truth particularly in politics. However unjustified criticism, condemnation and denigration where unable to prevent Hashim from speaking truth. Every one has right to agree and disagree with his views and concept but It will be

unjust to ignore Hashims straight forwardness and loyalty to his nation.

I have read few of his articles now in a complete book form; I sincerely believe that Mr.Hashim Qureshi's vision and experience deserve recognition on both political and diplomatic front. Mr.Hashim Qureshi's experience and interaction both at national and international level should not be unnoticed and ignored .He has spent most of his time on working for different solution of Kashmir. His experience and encounter with truth, beyond any doubt needs support and applaud.

(Moulana) Ahmad Khazir

President

Tanzeem e Ulame Hind
Deoband (UP)
20/03/2010

Acknowledgement

Many friends, particularly the *Chattan* readership, assisted me in giving shape to this collection of articles. I am thankful to them. I am indebted to the proprietor and the staff at the Weekly *Chattan* who provided space to my articles so as to reach wide sections of readership.

In particular, I must thank my old and dear friend Dr. Pandita, who kindly agreed to translate the material from Urdu into English for the convenience of English knowing readers, I am thankful of my Son Junaid Qureshi who also translated some articles and I must thank my daughter's Laila Qureshi,Sana Qureshi and son Abrar Qureshi who also help me to compose this book.

My colleagues and sympathizers in our political struggle deserve my thanks for standing by me even in uncertain situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

I am thankful to my wife Zaib and children who are a great source of support and inspiration to me in service to my people.

Hashim Qureshi

Saeeda House, Nishat
Srinagar-Kashmir
March, 2010

INTRODUCTION

New social phenomenon

Unprecedented changes have occurred in the world during past three decades. These are prominently visible in international relations, geo political strategies and social configuration.

Great leaps forward in technological and scientific advancement has abridged distances, shrunk time, and opened marvelous opportunities of economic progress; the quality of life is immensely improved. While developing countries had to re-fashion their socio-economic structures to accommodate and even absorb imperatives of rapid development, technologically advanced countries with strong economic thrust much faster innovative options on them. As a result, developing societies are feeling the pressure of transition to ultra-modernism. In such a prospect many irritants are likely to surface. In particular, there is growing demand for social justice and economic parity.

It is curious that economic progress and economic deprivation, though contradictory in essence, have both contributed to the activation of dormant as well as wakeful social aspirations among underprivileged segments of developing societies. Recognition of identity is an urge and an aspiration.

The most eloquent expression of this phenomenon is to be understood in the Islamic revolution of Iran under theocratic dispensation in 1979. Commentators are still debating why of all the countries Iran should have chosen to go theocratic when she had come so close to the fringe of modernism. We should not forget that Iran's urge for recognition of her identity was articulated, albeit unsuccessfully, way back in 1950s. Did not that failure suggest that Iranian civil society recognized national identity not necessarily conditional to modernism? It was clear that Iran would

look for new and effective options to realize her urge for identity? And the option was seized even if it came belatedly and perhaps erratically in a sense---after nearly four decades. Soviet Union's incursion of Afghanistan was a foolhardy act of a totalitarian regime undertaken at a very wrong time. As Iranian revolution progressed, Islamic world looked at it with a mixture of anxiety and an air of expectancy. In their thinking Islam was pitted against the greatest power on earth. Evidently, Soviet recklessness in Afghanistan could not have produced consequences other than what it did. It boosted Islamic orthodoxy and it facilitated casual camaraderie between extremist religious forces and powerful western democracy. The Soviet Union had to pay a heavy price; it broke.

Muslim identity factor

The urge for recognition of identity among the Muslims in the world has become almost contagious. Some commentators try to dig into the history of western colonialism to look for the causes of Muslim resurgence. Today the US and her allies witness with anxiety the harsh consequences of a movement in whose resurgence they had a pivotal role. Those whom they once proudly called *mujahedeen* are now patently "terrorists" and "Theo-fascists". People are divided, societies are divided and countries are divided on the basics of this phenomenon and the ways of tackling it.

Muslims and Islam are at the centre of this phenomenon. But notwithstanding Iran's show of determination, the difference in the resurgence of Islam in Iran on the one hand and in Afghanistan-Pakistan on the other is vital. In Iran, popular Islam rose against theist American imperialism whereas in Afghanistan-Pakistan, political Islamic revival emerged out of opposition to atheist Russian imperialism. As we see, the Muslim world stands divided between supporters and opponents of western imperialism. To put it crudely, one may say that imperialism became an instrument of causing polarization of Islamic communities.

This divide has run into Muslim polity in another form --- revivalists and reformists. Curiously, the divide exists despite the proviso of *ijtihad* or re-interpretation of *Qur'an* and tradition. However, the divide is not of recent history; it has been there since the days of Caliphate. Exploiters count on this yawning chasm.

In no other religion do we find a fiercer controversy like "true" and "counterfeit" Muslims. Both aspects are variously interpreted. Essentially, the approach is of attaching purely ecclesiastical connotation in one case and economic, social and cultural parameters of assessment to the other.

How and why did this debate rise in Muslim scholastic circles? A very vital issue of far-reaching consequences was raised by the great Muslim historian-scholar Ibn Khaldun in late 13th century in Baghdad. Known as father of the science of Philosophy of History, he said that Arabs had conquered and Islamized a vast part of Asia where established societies with splendid civilizations existed prior to the advent of Arabs and the faith brought by their Prophet. A day would come, he asserted, when Muslims will have to consider how to adapt Islamic teachings, traditions and ways of life too many healthy and pragmatic socio-cultural trends of the conquered people. Ibn Khaldun was a profound scholar of social history and a visionary, who shuddered at the thought of Muslims, not willing to come out of their cocoon, and bask in the prospective synchronized civilizations that would inevitably take shape in Islamic empires, kingdoms and satrapies.

In all probability, Ibn Khaldun took the cue from Ismai'lia thinkers and outstanding philosophers of 10-11th century A.D. who attached supreme importance to logic as the instrument for arriving at the truth. Foremost among these great Islamic intellectuals was Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avecinna), the philosopher-physician from Turkistan, and the celebrated author of *al-Shifa* and *al-Qanun*. His *al-Shifa* is part of the syllabus of medical studies at Sorbonne University of France today. Ibn Sina debated the truth of even the most sensitive subjects like the prophet-hood, the divine message; the revealed book etc, which he said could be brought out through inductive and deductive process. This revolutionary idea indirectly challenged the entrenched attitude of blind faith. Ibn Sina initiated the great debate on the subject of belief and reason, which has seized the mind of the Muslims ever since. This takes us a couple of centuries back in Islamic history, and we mean the days of the Abbasid Caliphate. (7/8th century A.D). In the days of Haroon ar-Rashid, a bureau called *baitu'l-hikmat* (meaning the House of Knowledge) was established in Baghdad. Actually it was a bureau where the works of great Greek

masters like Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Galen, Hippocrates and others were translated from Greek into Arabic. Great scholars not only Muslims but of different faiths, too, particularly the Jewish and Zoroastrian, who were polyglots, assembled at the bureau to make their contributions. Mansoor ar-Rashid ordered that remuneration for each great work translated into Arabic would be gold equal to its weight. This priceless fund of knowledge passed on to the Roman Empire, and later on, got disseminated to various European societies. Renaissance of mid - 16th century in Europe was a sequel to this transfer of scientific fund of knowledge. On that basis, ultimately came up the powerful and magnificent structure called modern European or western civilization.

The crux of this unique service of the Muslims to human civilization was to establish fecundity of the faculty of reason and rationality in comparison to blind faith. Ibn Sina tells us that he had access to this great fund of knowledge at the library in Khwarazm, and he rummaged box after box of manuscripts to drink deep from the works of great masters.

In centuries that followed, Muslim scholars of eminence took up the challenging task of interpreting the thoughts of great Greek masters now available to them in their own language. At Alexandria (Iskandariyah) in Egypt, scholars engaged themselves in mighty debates on basic issues touched upon by the masters. It was here that differences of opinion on various issues surfaced among Islamic scholars, theologians and liberals. This phenomenon was not too surprising. Controversy on crucial issues had raged for a long time till Ibn Sina pronounced the historic judgment. He said that there was no controversy over the thoughts of Aristotle and Plato; the problem was with the interpreters who interpreted according to their understanding.

Reason and faith

Reverting to the theme of logic versus blind faith, the logjam that gripped Muslim society in early Middle Ages (11 – 14 century A.D.), the rise of dominant satraps in Khurasan (11-12th century A.D.) --- the semi - autonomous but crucially important eastern province of the Caliphate --- and their support to and dependence on feudal structure of society came as a shot in the arm of Islamic orthodoxy. Thinkers following Greek school

of thought, or the logicians (*istadlaliyun*) became the target of the wrath of traditionalists, the upholders of the ideology of blind faith (*muttakallimun*). Ghazali, the traditionalist, wrote *Tahafatu'l-Filasafa* in which he strongly underrated those who called logic the mother of all sciences. Thus from 12th century A.D. onwards, feudalism and orthodoxy became complementary to each other establishing inseparability of religion and politics for the inheritors of Caliphate. This marked the beginning of the decline of the age of reason in Islamic societies; belief and tradition arched over the institutions of Islamic state.

Industrial Revolution in Europe towards the second half of the 17th century gradually reduced the power of the church. With that, rational argument that had been almost banished from the Islamic world, found a fertile ground to flourish in European societies with new and fascinating dimensions. Martin Luther's reformative agenda had opened great vistas that strengthened the position of the age of reason. Alas, neither an industrial revolution of sorts nor a thinker of Martin Luther's vision was thrown up by the Muslim society for many centuries to come. The fund of science and knowledge, which Muslims so painstakingly brought into limelight, illuminated the houses of others while Muslims relapsed into darkness. With each passing century, the gap between the two grew wider. No wonder, therefore, that 21st century, a high watermark of socio-economic development in Western societies, is seen as potent threat to cynical disregard of creative faculty of the best of God's creation (*ashrafu'l-ma*khluqat). Man's absolute surrender to the Supreme came in clash with his innovative and creative potential. Alama Iqbal subtly alluded to this fundamental contradiction:

Main khatakta hun dil-e yazdan main kante ki tarah
Tu faqat Allah hoo Allah hoo Allah hoo

It means that introspective minds within the Islamic fold did recognize the role of human intellect and reason in the process of social evolution. But their circumspection is a baffling question that has been dogging the Muslim community.

However, the proposition has another vital dimension. Quite understandably, in a society steeped in unending controversy over

predestined and freewill (*jabr wa qadr*), acceptance of western view that leaves the future of mankind to the interplay of forces of intellect, is almost outlandish. In their view it is tantamount to questioning the omnipotence of the Supreme Being: it undermines the entire structure on which Islamic concept of relationship between Man and his Creator rests.

For western existentialists reason remains a prescription for ascent to higher levels of temporal life. For them, each passing century proved the veracity of logic being the mother of all sciences. Great scientific discoveries that followed Industrial Revolution of A.D. 1688 in England established the fact that science and technology were the arbiters of the destiny of mankind. While veering to this inference, western societies left the divine and divinity either to benign negligence or to the dreaming Easterners.

But to the Muslims, ultimate power rests with Allah and the ultimate arbiter of destinies is Allah. Therefore in Islamic culture, the source of a victory and an achievement is Allah. Absolute surrender to Allah is one of the basic tenets of Islamic teaching. He is the arbiter (*jabber* wa q*ahhar*). This then is one of the basic hindrances in Islam's interaction with the western world and its ideological tributaries. But the struggle is not necessarily between technology savvy west and tradition dominated Islam. Apart from this dilemma, a major part of the struggle lies within the broad Islamic fold itself. It is the revival of the long drawn struggle between the *istadlaliyun* and *muttakallimun* of 12th century in its new avatar of "pure" and "counterfeit" Islam. Taliban and Al-Qaeda is also the product of same thinking. They are spokesperson of orthodox Islam. Thus entire Islamic polity has become a victim of dissensions, strife and differences.

Ordinarily, no external player is either interested in or qualified to settle this domestic dispute of the *ummah*. Awakening has to come from within. It is important to realize that overt or covert role of an external entity is only for its self-aggrandizement. It is for the Muslim leadership of contemporary times to lead the community out of the labyrinth of conflicting convictions and debilitating contradictions. The question of settling score with the West will recede once internal conflict is set at rest, and a cosmopolitan system of 'Islam at work with other civilizations is

produced. It should be possible to evolve a viable formula of reconciling to the imperatives of contemporary scientific age without eroding pristine principles of faith. It is also equally important to come out of the cocoon of a fossilized mindset, and give new direction, vitality and animation to the process of socialization.

Muslims and modernity

More than twenty million Muslims of Asian and African continents have migrated to the western countries including the US. Millions more are waiting in the wings. These émigrés have adjusted to the western way of life without losing their identity. This means that for Muslims adjustability in non-Muslim environs is neither elusive nor discordant. Therefore the question of discrimination, drilled into the heads of youth in seminaries, has economic or political but not religious trappings. Governments of western countries are prepared to remunerate Muslim families handsomely if they volunteer to return to their countries of origin bag and baggage. But why they do not want to leave, is a very profound question, which Muslim ecclesiastical authorities must answer.

Two non-Semitic regions that came under Islamic sway with Arab invasion, namely Iran and Central Asia, converted fully to the faith of the invaders. But the case of the Indian sub-continent is somewhat different. India of those days was identifiable not necessarily with Hindu religion but surely with sub-continental civilization. The vast land mass of India accommodated many nations and their indigenous cultures but at the same time it supported an over-arching civilization. Muslim conquerors coming from abroad primarily focused on raising an empire and ruling over the subjugated nations. Conversion of local people to the new faith was a by-product of this goal. The concept of providing civilizational base to the empire was conspicuously absent in their philosophy of statehood. It has already been said that the concept of victorious Muslims kingdoms and principalities adapting to indigenous traditions of a conquered region with deep rooted symbols of civilization was raised as early as the 12th century by Ibn Khaldun. Except for Jalalu-Din- Akbar, no Muslim authority in the sub-continent tried to translate Ibn Khaldun's remarkable vision into practice. But Akbar, too, failed in his half-hearted attempt because his radical socio-cultural reform was a super structure without a

base. Carving a Muslim State in India in 1947 was a practical expression of the ideology of separatism, something unusual to the history of state building in Islam. It was the outcome of chronic ideological conflict dogging the *ummah* for many centuries: its managers rejoiced at the triumph of orthodoxy. Notably the founder of Jammat-e- Islami, Maulana Abu Ala Mowdoodi had opposed the creation of Pakistan keeping in mind the fundamental principle of Islam.

Kashmir polity

The work in hand is a collection of my essays on contemporary situation in Jammu and Kashmir State, which is contiguous to the newly formed Islamic State of Pakistan. We have a majority of Muslims in the State and their predominance to the tune of 67 % in the region of Jammu and Kashmir. Islam came to Kashmir around 1339 A.D. not through invaders but through missionaries from Iran and Central Asia. They were proselytes, volunteering for a mission of proselytizing in Kashmir.

For nearly two thousand years of her pre-Islamic history, Kashmir was ruled by autocratic and mostly imbecile Hindu kings. Kashmir polity under the Hindu rule, and particularly towards its fag end, was groaning under oppressive Brahmanic nobility that drew strength and influence from feudal chiefs, daring warriors and villainous ministers. For long, Kashmir peasantry was the first to bear the brunt of state oppression. The advent of Islam that promised new ideas of social behavior and new norms of intra-community relationship was, historically and psychologically, bound to have a strong impact on the masses of Kashmiri people.

But some fundamental questions remained. Did the replacement of an authoritarian culture by the culture of fraternized relationship (*Ukhawwat*) mean much in terms of material reconstruction of Kashmirian society? Did Islamic mission in Kashmir end with the conversion of the non-Muslims to the faith and their temples to mosques? Was Kashmiri Islam to remain perpetually entangled in small and mundane theological controversies and not think of a wholesome policy that would infuse new blood into the social, economic and political veins of the nation?

An entirely new phenomenon of Kashmir history, after the advent of the



Hashim Qureshi
interacting with writers, scholars and media people at informal meeting



Hashim Qureshi addressing a Press Conference at Srinagar



Dr.Shabir_Chowdry_Hashim_Qureshi_and
Showkat_Kashmiri_Hashim_and_Shaukat



Hashim_Qureshi_Addresing_in_IKA_confrence_in_Brusel

Muslims, was that ultimate ruling authority passed into the hands of non-indigenous actors. When in commanding position, their treatment of the locals, subordinates and camp followers, repudiated the much touted theory of fraternized relationship. Conspiracies and Machiavellian statecraft galore at the royal court worked canker in Kashmirian society. In a sense the rot that ate into its vitals during the last two centuries of Hindu rule, continued in its full fury even though royalty had changed hands and civilization transition had happened. Something was wrong with Kashmirian psyche.Physical geography of Kashmir hindered, rather virtually blocked, its brisk interaction with the mainstream Muslim world at this point of time. The rise of ferocious Mongols, warlike Central Asian satraps and adventurous warriors and their bloody exploits disrupted traditional network of trade and trade routes in the Asian region. It choked Kashmir's trade arteries to the ancient Silk Rout. Kashmir's economy crumbled.

For this and other reasons indicated above, Muslim polity under the Sultans soon degenerated into a specter of misrule and mismanagement. The rise of powerful kingdoms and principalities beyond the southern borders of Kashmir posed serious threat to national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kashmir kingdom, now steeped in a milieu of social disorder and economic depression.

To make this situation more precarious, sectarianism raised its ugly head in Kashmir Muslim society. In 15th century, Iran, after having left behind its long era of fragmented sovereignty, was inching towards the consolidation of State and centralization of power. A viable social support-structure was desirable and welcome. This marked the beginning of stirring up Shia' sensitivities in Iranian social milieu, which ultimately led to the establishment of official Iranian Shia' state and the powerful Saffavis in the second half of the 17th century A.D.

Reverberations of rumblings in Iranian society could not be missed in sections of Kashmirian Muslim society that had, by now, got acclimatized to the cult of early missionaries from Iran. Division of society on sectarian basis prompted some fixated elements to seek support from external actors who dominated political scenario at that time. This was the beginning of the most painful phenomenon of Kashmir history --- people

and leaders looking beyond physical borders of their native land to get their political differences arbitrated by a third party. Little did they know that in their neighborhood lay strong imperial powers coveting more lands and more resources? Did Kashmiris voluntarily opt for their enslavement? Did they abysmally lose faith in the independence of a nation? Were they condemned to eternal degradation and isolation? This is the core issue that has unfortunately overflowed to our times.

Regional politics

After passing through millennia of darkness, oppression and destitution, after braving tyranny and coercion by repressive Rajas and despotic Sultans, after passing through the rapacity and avarice of feudal lords, petty chieftains, and highland robbers from the times of her known history to the beginning of the 19th century, Kashmir was drawn into the vortex of regional political game plan of two European imperial powers --- Great Britain and Tsarist Russia--- vying for supremacy in Asia. In a bid to check the march of Tsarist legions south of the Hindukush --- the Central Asian watershed between the territories of Tsarist Russia and British India --- the British policy planners decided conversion of the north-western region adjoining Punjab into a separate entity because at that point of time, the non-descript region already happened to be an appendage of the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore. It was placed under a powerful Jammu chieftain, who acquired possession of the valley through a sale deed, and of northern areas of Gilgit, Baltistan, Ladakh and Zanskar through force of arms. Thus came into existence in A.D. 1847 the modern State of Jammu and Kashmir. The issue of the sale of Kashmir has been frequently used to deride the Dogra autocratic rulers. But Kashmir is not an isolated case in world history. The Presidents of the US purchased many states of America, like Texas and California, which now form part of the US mainland. Not too far back, Russia sold Alaska to the US. This is not to exonerate the imperialistic mentality of parties involved in the transaction, but the real problem lies not in the sale of Kashmir but elsewhere. If we banish prejudice, we shall find that the founder of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was Maharja Gulab Singh who founded it in 1846.

It has to be recalled that inviting or prompting external actors to rule over

Kashmir just out of some vendetta or emotion or for gaining sectarian supremacy was worse than the sale of the land.

With the emergence of bi-polar power structure on international plane, and division of India into two states ---- one of the two along communal lines --- after World War II, the two major world powers conducted their regional strategies mostly through their proxies. Creation of Pakistan was the triumph of orthodoxy, which the age of science and technology had put under strain. Kashmir significantly figured in the game plan of those whose hands kept moving behind the curtain.

Propaganda blitzkrieg emerged a powerful weapon of cold war era. Victory of the Allies was labeled as victory of democracy and freedom of expression. For self-styled custodians of democracy, it became the rock-hard stick to beat its "enemies" with.

In the communist state of Soviet Union, Great Britain envisioned a much more formidable enemy than in Tsarist Russia. After World War II, economically debilitated Great Britain focused more on post war reconstruction at home. In a vacuum of sorts created by her inability to play the traditional colonial role actively in Asia, the United States of America stepped in. The British had smelt oil in the Gulf in 1905 and then taking into account its importance as a powerful weapon of political arbitration, the world was to witness in years to come the great hegemony of American "democracy".

Reverting to Kashmir situation, for the first time in her chequered history spanning nearly two thousand years, a mass movement demanding institutionalizing of Kashmiri identity surfaced in the first decade of the 20th century. Indian leaders were influenced by the socialist movement in Russia and parts of Europe. British intelligentsia, with which emerging Indian leaders were in liaison, became the catalyst to the Indian National Congress' great nationalist struggle udder stalwarts like Gandhi. Congress movement was not only a movement against colonial domination of India. It was also a movement against a social - cultural order that stood in the way of nation building process. Thus participation not separation was the hallmark of the movement. Congress movement could be weakened by striking at the root of this hallmark; that was the

game plan of the colonial power when it was convinced that it had to quit the sub-continent sooner or later.

Kashmir freedom movement

The pioneers of Kashmir freedom movement were those Kashmir's who went to Lahore and other cities of India for educational pursuits at the beginning of the 20th century. They came into contact with nationalists of all hues irrespective of caste or creed. They compared the backwardness of their State with other parts of India and came to the conclusion that unless people rose in unison to reconstruct their destiny, things would not change. Therefore, in line with the ideology of Indian National Congress, it was desirable to launch a movement for doing away with the autocratic rule in Kashmir. Freedom was indivisible.

Contrary to this, the basis on which Pakistan came into being was the theory of separatism and religious homogeneity, which as it should have been, proved the biggest of myths.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's decision to support State's accession to India in 1947 was not only on the basis of ideological similarity between National Conference and National Congress.There was one very important facet to this solidarity. It was a stupendous effort of harmonizing dogmatism and liberal scientific temper of 20th century through democratic process of nation building. This was of greatest concern to the Muslims in the sub-continent who had opted not to shift to the Islamic State newly carved out on the basis of religion.

Application of this analysis to Kashmir is of singular importance. The land to tiller programme of Naya Kashmir meant a frontal attack on the feudal-orthodox combine that had arisen around the 9th/10th century in the eastern parts of Islamic Caliphate, and determinedly dogged the Muslim *ummah* through subsequent centuries.It held the *ummah* a hostage to non-resilient ecclesiastical institutions.

In that sense, Sheikh Abdullah made a historic contribution to pull his people out of a frozen and fossilized mindset. This was a unique attempt of hammering reconciliation between blind faith and reason. He strongly

thought that Kashmirian society had the capacity to absorb the process of fusion of faith and reason, which some people in our days were disposed to call, albeit inadvertently as Kashmiriyat. And yet he did not dismiss the possibility of this fusion ultimately culminating in independent identity of Kashmiris for which they had begun their long struggle in the first decade of the 20th century. That was the basis on which he opted for accession to India. They could have decided in favour of an independent state of Jammu and Kashmir instead of accession to India. They faltered because they did not anticipate the fallout of such a decision on the situation in the sub-continent.

Crucial decision

It has to be said that before turning to Indian Union in October 1947, the Sheikh tried to have an experiment with the founders of Pakistan if they were agreeable to ensuring Kashmiris the urge for recognition of their identity. Behind this demand of the Sheikh, stood the sordid saga of two thousand years of our slavery, coercion and subjugation. Pakistani authorities spurned his demand not only because they never trusted Kashmir's but also, and perhaps more probably, because they had no grasp of the history of the peoples and the regions. This also explains the spirit behind inclusion of Article 370 in the Indian Constitution.

What are the objectives of those who sponsored and abetted armed militancy in Kashmir in 1990? They have goaded revivalists into intensifying traditional strife against liberalism. In doing so, they count on emotionalism of the Kashmir's. It aims at disrupting all conditions and settings that would help Kashmir wriggle out of a frozen mindset: it wants Kashmir's to acquiesce to the domination of feudal-orthodoxy combine as of yore. In an independent Kashmir, it sees the image of its failure as a theocratic state.

The quest of Kashmiris to revisit their identity will not fade away. We need to plan the future course of our action if we want the movement to succeed. It should be possible to resort to the powerful instrument of ethics of reason, as did Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. But of course we need a couple of Gandhi's and Mandela's to pull us out of the quagmire of the cult of violence thrust on us. An independent Kashmir has to be a

friend to all and foe to none. It has to be the home of all who are the product of this soil.

In the age of globalization, we shall need to interact with countries and nations to build our own. We cannot afford to let our society get fractured at the instance of this or that element. We must look beyond the lands and climes; we must be part of the comity of nations and member of international community. We have many friends and we must widen their circle.

Path ahead

I have briefly traced some facets of Islamic history. The purpose is to highlight the power of reasoned action and the need for it in transforming society. Logic controls emotion and we have always been the victims of emotions. The time has come to cast a glance on our past, our drawbacks, and try to rectify them.

Islam has tremendous capacity of accommodation and adjustment. Its ethos has also the quality of adaptability. Political Islam has, over the centuries, taken a heavy toll of our progress. The instruments that assist political Islam have to be blunted and replaced by reforms that harmonies tradition with modernity. The example of India in this respect is appreciable because she is trying to harmonize extremist's elements of many faiths with national imperatives. Some stray events such as in Gujarat, Orissa and Karnatak may induce us to think that India is a non-secular state. But this all is a temporary situation which melts with the passage of time.

The crux of my essays collected in this volume is what is stated in the preceding paragraphs. I am hopeful my voice will be heard by my compatriots. I know they are fed up with directionless leadership. My fear is that in their unabated quest for identity, personality and freedom, they may fall victim to villainous leaders who have been holding us hostages to their self interests. I know as a free and independent nation, we shall have to interact with our neighbors for trade and commerce, for economic and social development, for promotion of democratic and secular norms, for scientific and technological advancement and much more. We shall

have to maintain thousands and one bonds with them, all in good faith. We have to live with them as decent neighbours.

Our struggle for independent Jammu and Kashmir leads us to this line of thinking when we talk of independent Kashmir. Keeping in mind the principles of peaceful co-existence with our neighbours and strengthening mutual good political and economic relations, we shall have to show due regard to political and emotional concerns of all minority identities living in Jammu and Kashmir. Religious principles and beliefs of all communities shall have to be shown respect. Greater attention has to be given to less developed regions and their deprivations have to be removed. This would also dilute separatist tendencies within the State. The State is lagging behind in power, industry, transport, education and environmental sectors. For last six decades, the State has become a victim of political disorder, which has resulted in widespread corruption and bribery. If one wants to live the life, one can do so only by bribery. It is only by dint of bribery that one can breathe and it is only the bribe which will take him to the graveyard or to the crematorium.

The unfortunate thing is that whenever people come on the streets to protest against non-availability of electric power or firewood or against unemployment or police excesses, they do not strictly restrict themselves to these problems. Some elements within the protesting crowds stick out their necks and raise slogans such as "What do we want – Pakistan or what do we want – azaadi" thereby inviting official machinery to perpetrate excesses and high-handedness. The real problems, for which people had come out on the streets to make protestation, get submerged in these slogans.

This tendency has only helped government institutions to become indolent and apathetic.Dereliction of duty has become rampant.We find that government departments are engrossed in solving their individual problems instead of addressing the problems of the people. If during the freedom struggle a community is in a position of receiving benefits of education, employment, industry, roads and infrastructure, the surprise is that the community has no realization of these attainments but ideologically and practically it remains engrossed with "azaadi" alone. When it attains freedom, then only will it addresses the task of

reconstruction, is the thinking. Do they care to realize that by the time we win freedom, our social system, moral values, ecology, water resources including Wular and Dal all will have perished? While struggling for freedom, we need to carry along our social requirements like environment, education, health services, water resources, forests, mineral wealth, agriculture etc.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the organizations that are raising slogans of accession to Pakistan or of freedom have demanded heavy sacrifices from the people. But unfortunately they did not bring into existence such institutions as would take care of the wards of those who made sacrifices. When people beheld depressing condition of close dependents of freedom fighters they gradually began distancing themselves from the movement. This is despite the fact that even now the masses of people sustain emotions of seeking their rights and their identity.

In the meanwhile the government institutions began seeking revenge from all those people and in all spheres as were linked to this movement in one way or the other. Be it the issue of finding an employment or obtaining a passport or going on Hajj pilgrimage, government's treatment has been sordid.

Reaching the outside world

I have included '*Open Letter to India Media*' in this work. In it I have expressed disapproval of their flagrant violation of the journalistic etiquette by suppressing justice and truth and treating Kashmir something like Indian colony. I presented a paper titled *Solution of Kashmir – Stimulus Peace* in a conference at the European Parliament in December 2008. I had appraised the world of the truth about Kashmir elections of 2008.

In another article under the title '*Flowers of Homage*' I paid homage to Maqbool Bhat, the Martyr. The purpose is to present the true picture of his struggle and ideas to the people

In The Hague Peace Conference of 1999, I presented a paper under the title *Kashmir: Freezing to Defreeze* in which I suggested a viable formula for solving Kashmir issue. Copies of the formula were addressed to the governments of most of the countries of the world including India,

Pakistan and many leading international NGOs. I understand that this formula was liked by a host of intellectuals and organizations engaged in debating Kashmir issue. Many political circles and parties spoke about my suggestion of free trade across the line of control, and confidence building measures for India, Pakistan and Kashmir. The PDP took the cue from my formula and made a demand for opening the line of control to carry on trade between two parts of Kashmir.

I am of firm conviction that outstanding issues between India and Pakistan cannot be solved unless the walls of hatred standing between the two for more than six decades in the past are pulled down. It is of much importance that the people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir are allowed freedom of movement and freedom to conduct trade. This is a practical way of removing the deep-seated hatred from the minds of the people.

The reason why I included the article *Kashmir: Why Revolt Against India* is that many Indian citizens are led astray by incorrect briefing and ask why Kashmiris should separate from India when India is spending billions of rupees for the development of Kashmir. I have tried to provide an answer to this question by debating political, economic and environmental issues and facts about Kashmir.

I have also included in the book one article by a famous Pakistani journalist namely late Khalid Hassan, a cousin of K.H. Khurshid. Its title is *The Truth about Ganga Hijacking*. He was a journalist of great integrity and served as media adviser to Z.A. Bhutto when in power.. The purpose of including this article is to open the eyes of those who are given to levelling false accusations against me in the matter of hijacking the India aircraft.

The substance of other articles included in the collection is reflected in their titles.

Prior to this, my first book on Kashmir situation, namely *Unveiling of the Truth* was published in 1998. Collection of book reviews on this work has also been appended to the volume in hand.

All that I have to say is that nearly two thousand five hundred years ago the people of Athens in Greece were instigated against the great philosopher Socrates. Dramatic works were produced to denounce him and the poets composed verses to castigate his thoughts. A jury comprising 501 persons indicted and decreed death punishment to him. His students and followers tried to contrive his escape from the prison by

influencing the guards. But Socrates rejected their life saving device, and said that "if he escaped from the jail, even then one day or the other, death would overtake him and he would be no more. But if he took the cup of poison and died, he would live forever."

Appealing peoples' conscience

How many cups of poison have I taken by uncovering the truth about Kashmir? I want to prepare the coming generations in India, Pakistan and Kashmir for knowing the truth and thus shaping their future in right direction. I am aware that blind emotions, religious fanaticism, political aggrandizement, perfidies of intelligence agencies and the propaganda of sold-out politicians work in tandem to stir up strong opposition to my thinking, ideology and my Endeavour. But I am confident that when a future historian and future generations begin to seek the truth about Kashmir, India and Pakistan, they will find that my thinking and perceptions become the roadmap for their inquiry and I will be remembered like Socrates

Like Maqbool Bhat the Martyr, I, too, have been accused of being a Pakistani and an Indian agent. For last nine years, I am facing prosecution in an Indian court for being an alleged Pakistani agent. Religious fanatics call me a disbeliever because I uphold the ideology of secularism. Indian and Pakistani agents active in Kashmir bring various charges against me because I stand for return of Kashmir to its original status, and work for making Jammu and Kashmir a free secular state in order to strengthen peace in the sub-continent. Because I disclose the truths about Kashmir case, various allegations are made against me. Many journalists and intellectuals who unfortunately fail to demonstrate the courage of speaking the truth ignore my views, perceptions and my struggle. Because of being non-communal, and because of my accepting the people of the State irrespective of their faith, sect and ideology as its citizens, I am branded as an agent of New Delhi. I am derided in Islamabad for my conviction of unifying the State of Jammu and Kashmir and considering Gilgit and Baltistan its integral part. I am ridiculed in concerned circles in Delhi for raising voice against oppression of the people of Kashmir, and against dividing the State into religious segments. For unraveling the truth about Kashmir, I am being scorned every moment. During forty-five years of my political life, like Socrates I have often been made to drink the cup of poison.

The volume in your hand contains such of my articles as deal with themes like these.These were published in the Weekly *Chattan* of Srinagar.These

have now been rendered into English with the specific objective that English knowing segment of society particularly our ruling groups, bureaucracy and the world abroad understand our problems in right perspective. I have made a very sincere attempt to base my comments and observations on ground realities, to identify the problems of the people of State of Jammu and Kashmir. We need to make a diagnosis of the disease and its treatment is a united initiative by all of us.

My writings never mean to denigrate any faction or political group or India or Pakistan. I never intend to hurt anybody's sentiments. I nurse deep and warm sentiments towards the masses of people of Jammu and Kashmir and towards my motherland (J&K) and this prompts me to identify our problems pragmatically. If in doing so any group or any party feels it has been hurt, I would like to tell them with all politeness that I am only trying to find a solution to our problem and look at Kashmir issue through the pages of history when searching for a solution.

I am sincerely thankful to the editorial staff of the Weekly *Chattan*, and in particular of its editor, Tahir Mohiud-Din that they always had an encouraging word for me.I am thankful to all those who appreciated my writings which gave me a big support. I am thankful to a dear friend who rendered Urdu texts to English.

I have been writing regularly for last two years. Occasionally, you will find some topographical articles as well. It has to be understood that issues are not always temporary; they remain attached to one or the other group of society. Jammu and Kashmir seldom finds a solution to the problems that crop up from time to time these rather get exacerbated with the passing of each day. I am confident that our readers will read it keeping in mind that the sentiment of seeking the truth has been the catalyst.

My aim is to create consciousness among our nation: I like that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should muster courage to hear the truth and speak the truth. Our people young and old, men and women, boys and girls, all wherever they are at work, in schools, in colleges, in the marketplaces, in buses and in parks, in police stations and bus stops, anywhere, they should breathe and speak with courage, freedom and truth.I want that the mouths of the people in our State should open

against fear and trepidation. Their hands should be put to stopping oppression and terror. People should launch a strong and vibrant movement against corruption, destruction of forest trees, nepotism, exploitation and general loot. They should rise to stop destruction of water resources, ignorance and hegemonic oppression. They should not only live with dignity and honour within their country and outside it but should also make their land a true paradise for future generations. Whatever decision the people of this land make, they should make it with full consciousness and with great wisdom. A decision made as a result of helplessness, blackmail, dominance, - greed or hero - worship should never be thrust on oneself or on future generations.

The eternal truth for the realization of which the soul of the people of Jammu and Kashmir has withered is that we cannot bear in any case our separation from our Pandit brothers and sisters. They have to be brought back on the soil of the motherland in any case. It is our moral and religious duty to bring them back. We must bring our generation and our future generations to full growth of our personality and identity.

I must add that except for a handful of clever Kashmiri Pandits who have maneuverability, a large majority of them are languishing in exile in sub-huan conditions. The worst is that the Indian government never realized its responsibility of showing them adequate care and sympathy rather used their misery, destitution, extirpation and helplessness to promote its hegemonic interests in Kashmir. Great injustice has been done to this segment of Kashmirian nation just because of the smallness of their number which doesn't make them a vote bank of any poetical party.

I care for revitalization of our conscience, truth, honesty and mutual love and respect. Above all, I want that people should develop love for their honest conscience and their motherland. If this is achieved, then we shall be able to liberate ourselves and our land from the clutches of fear, terror, bullets, bomb blasts, prison houses, illegal possessors and the tyrants of the time.

Note of warning

Before concluding this exposition, let me reiterate that Delhi rulers are interfering in every matter of the State of Jammu and Kashmir; be it the

selection of the chief minister, transfer of top bureaucrats or even rewarding people for their achievements. The unjust attitude of Delhi and their nexus with few Kashmiri leaders have all the time created confusion in the hearts and minds of Kashmiris. The people of Kashmir are unable to understand this nexus resulting in discontent between them and Delhi. Unfortunately, the policy makers in Delhi have proved themselves as the surrogates of few Kashmiri leaders who, in return, serve as their stake holders in power. They have tarnished the image of Indian democracy and are misleading them on Kashmir issue. It was shocking when recently Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Mumkan, a renegade involved in several cases including heinous crimes like murder, extortion and kidnapping has been awarded the prestigious Padma Bushan on recommendations of these surrogates. This has sent an alarming message in Kashmir about the killers of Kashimris who are treated as heroes in India. I am aware that most of Indians are unaware about the this criminal attitude of politicians who are at the helm of affairs in Jammu and Kashmir. If the Indians know that a murder, kidnapper and criminal is awarded with Padma Bhushan they will surely oppose it tooth and nail and will definitely come for rescue of Kashmiris. People believe that Delhi is considering us there colony which is neither good for Indians nor for Kashmiris.

It is deplorable that the Indian state is playing cheap populist politics in Kashmir by rewarding criminals and cronies but underestimating the role of honest, sincere and dedicated Kashmiris desirous of contributing to peace process and normalization of situation. What New Delhi needs to understand is that a couple of bullying families who are recipients of its largesse are much hated and disliked in Kashmir? In fact they have done much disservice to the Indian nation and the Indian state wants to hide it from the view of ordinary Indian citizen.

Discrimination

Leave aside the privileges accruing from Article 370, our state has not even such powers as are available to other states of the union under its constitution. Senior IAS, IPS officers and bureaucrats are usually drawn from outside the state. I am reminded that the IG Police deputed from Punjab to POK was always opposed by the local people there. We have a host of non-state senior officers here. This policy creates an impression among the local bureaucrats, police officers and civil society that Indian authorities do not trust Kashmiris. History confirms it. Indian rulers did not trust Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah who had endorsed the accession of the state to the Indian Union. He was removed from power with much humiliation in 1953 and put behind bars.

Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad, who followed the Sheikh as Prime Minister, cemented State's accession to India and helped New Delhi tighten its grip on the state. He let lose repression against anybody daring to speak against tyranny and Indian occupation. But he too was sidelined ignominiously through Kamaraj Plan.

If the accession of the state to the Indian Union had remained strictly restricted to three items agreed to by the Maharja, namely defence, foreign affairs and currency, perhaps Kashmir would not have to face the disastrous situation as we find now. India has always discredited those who strongly believe in secularism, non-sectarianism and securing state's accession to the Indian Union. Stories of betraying these segments are many. The result has been that India is left with no friends in Kashmir. How can one become friends with them when they go back on their commitments and take recourse to deception? Not only that commitments made on international level, too, are disregarded.

This is the reason why some mainstream political parties who have a majority of seats in the legislative assembly are loath to protest to Delhi authorities against curbing or usurping some of their powers. The reason is that their protest will not be heard or responded. And if they insist, they will be shown the door. Hence they remain silent and the powers of the state were gradually getting squeezed day after day. In Kashmir, India has not been looking for friends but for agents and spies. Hence if the State of Jammu and Kashmir is geographically part of Indian Union, this is only because of heavy presence of Indian army and security forces.

Scholars of world history know that no people have ever been kept in permanent subjugation through muscle power. Liberation movements do ultimately succeed and liberate the enslaved nations. We have the example of Algeria under French occupation, Viet Nam under American occupation and Central Asia under Russian occupation. In the light of these historical events how can India or Pakistan militarily maintain their permanent control over the people of the state?

We need to remind Indian intelligentsia that in 1947 the people of Jammu and Kashmir did not opt for accession with Pakistan despite religious commonality. Not only that, they resisted the tribal attack on the state even though unarmed. Indian army was invited because the Maharaja had signed the accession document with the Indian government. In the background of this situation what is the reason that today Kashmiris consider Indian army an occupational and an alien army?

I want to know from Indian print and electronic media why is it that it avoids uncovering and highlighting the oppression and suppression unleashed by the local regime in our state. We seldom find them taking up a story of corruption, nepotism or abuse of authority in regard to the state. Why is it that the Indian media links the protest of Kashmiris against an incident of rape and murder of innocent women to separatism? They should understand that by doing so, they lose their credibility with the people in Kashmir.

In this collection I have included one article under the title "Indian democracy, justice and we the Kashmiris". I have given some insight into my personal life in this article. I just want to tell my readers what treatment was meted out to me in the name of justice. I was tried twice for the same alleged crime. I had to go through fire and brimstone. This is just to cite an example and make the people partners in the "prizes" that have been handed over to me.

I am deeply indebted to Aditi Bhaduri, a versatile journalist of immense vision. She produced an insightful piece on MNWA Trust on the occasion of its Convention which she personally attended in Srinagar. It was published in *The Hindu* of 22 July 2007. I have great pleasure in including this article in the present volume believing that our readers will understand that there is a lot to be done on social front in Kashmir besides politics. Very few political parties are addressing this need. I place this book in your hands in the hope that the words of Faiz may resound loud:

Bol kih lab azad hain tere
Bol zaban ab tak Teri hai
Bol kih sach zindeh hai ab atak
Bol Jo kuchh kahna hai kah le

Translation: Speak, your lips are free
Speak it is your tongue
Speak for the truth is still alive
Speak whatever you want to say

New Chief Minister: Pre-requisites of the office

After three years, a Chief Minister of All India Congress Party took over as the Chief minister of J&K State. For last twenty or twenty five years the Congress Party has not been in power all over the country. In J&K, it complicated the Kashmir issue in the past and alienated the people in its lust for power. This notwithstanding, we also know that whenever the Congress party gave place to vision forbroad national interests, it did make sacrifice of power in Kashmir for upholding national interests. For example Mir Qasim relinquished office of chief minister in favour of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah although the Congress party had a majority in the legislative assembly. Against this, the Sheikh called the Congressmen "insects of a dirty lane." In 2002 elections, the Congress allowed Mufti Saeed's PDP to come power for first three years of the total term. With the expiry of its three-year, PDP handed over the reins of power to the Congress in accordance with the agreement between the two.

Something new in today's Congress assuming power is that the chief minister hails from Jammu region. This is a significant turn in the political history of the State. It is the right of a party winning majority votes in a fair election, and coming to power to elect a chief minister from any part of the state. However taking into account the special political situation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, it was thought feasible to have a chief minister from Kashmir. This tradition has been reversed with Azad becoming the chief minister.

It is hoped that the appointment of Azad will weaken and defeat the designs of such elements in Jammu region as want further vivisection of the state. Hopefully it will also strengthen the unity and solidarity of the state. We understand Azad is a gentleman and despite holding top and sensitive positions during his political career, he has a clean record. A movement is going on in Kashmir. More than a hundred thousand lives

have been sacrificed. Yet militancy is not only vibrant but the militants can also strike at will wherever and whenever they like. The question is how Azad Sahib would react to this situation. Will he follow in the footsteps of his predecessors and give himself up to indifference and go and recline in his seat or will he have a different agenda? I did some thinking on this subject, and I would humbly offer some suggestion to Azad Sahib. I am confident that he will run the full term with success if he acts on these suggestions. He must learn how to keep distance from the public, how to befriend corrupt officers, how to have special relations with bureaucracy and how to keep it in a happy mood, how to limit development to his constituency only, how to oblige close friends with promotions without doing any work, how to promote those in SFC against whom Anti-Corruption Cell has framed cases, how to create new posts for those against whom there are serious charges of corruption and bribery or against whom cases are already registered. The ways and methods of doing these things will be advised to him by his cabinet colleagues. They will tell him the art of how the poor, oppressed and innocent should be fleeced.

If Azad wants to have peaceful days, he should not embarrass such bureaucrats and police officials as are given to bribery, nepotism, and general loot. In keeping the tradition only those peons and clerks should be arrested on charges of alleged bribery who take a bribe between 50 and 200 rupees only. He should never touch those officers whose salary is anything between ten and twenty thousand per month but whose monthly expenditure is in the neighbourhood of forty to fifty thousand rupees, who live in mansions worth millions of rupees and who have opened bank accounts for their unborn grandchildren. He should never call to book such ministers and political leaders as have not only looted the state but also reduced it to the status of a beggar state. The following suggestions would be handy"

Do nothing for the welfare of unemployed youth. If they are addicts let them be; if they engage themselves in small brawls with the police or with one another in the lanes and by – lanes, let them go on with that pastime. And if these young people join militancy, let them do so.

Never question those who obtain loans in the name of starting factories

and workshops even if they have obtained thousands of millions of rupees from SFC for these purposes.

Corrupt officers in civil or police services should be promoted: honest and sincere officers should be transferred to those departments where they have nothing to do but just go on dozing in their chairs and thinking over the punishment for being honest.

Licenses should be issued without any hindrance for opening Maternity Homes and Private Hospitals, and later on no enquiry should be made whether these are hospitals or butcheries.

Kids born in Government Hospitals are reported to be lifted by cats or dogs. Medicines meant for in -door patients are sold by shopkeepers outside the hospital complex, and they are usually the relatives of the hospital staff. Doctors in Government hospitals are minting money by practicing in private clinics. Azad Sahib should never think of diverting his attention to this situation.

Carefree Transport Commissioner is taking a nap in his arm chair. The department is run by obtaining bribes and commission through agents in the RTO office. It does not hurt Azad Sahib and, therefore, let the show go on.

Water resources in Kashmir are gradually drying up. More than seven thousand poplar trees have been planted in the Dal Lake shoreline with the purpose of grabbing the land. Of these, nearly three thousand are planted by various state departments. Each tree consumes 25 liters of water in 24 hours. Which computes to 1.75 lakh litres of water of the lake? In addition nearly 7,000 illegal residential houses have been raised to which the government has supplied electric power, water and telephone connection and other civic facilities. All garbage from these houses and the houseboats is dumped in the water of the Dal, making the once beautiful lake a big garbage bin. Let it be. If this pollution endangers the life of the citizens of Srinagar let it is; it will solve the problem of growing population of Kashmir. After all when water dries up, underwater soil will appear on which ministers, high ups, officers and their close kith and kin will raise palaces and build colonies to fill their coffers. Let them

go ahead with their ambitious plans. Azad Sahib has no need to rake this big issue and as its consequence disturb his inner bliss. After all have not billions of rupees granted to the State in the name of Dal project been swallowed by ministers, bureaucrats and yes men? Sheikh Abdullah permitted construction of a hotel in the Dal and thus was instrumental in pushing it to destruction. Why should not Azad Sahib permit his friends and near ones to build more hotels on the bank of the Dal and thus settle the Dal issue once for all. This will also help in stopping (the nuisance of) foreign tourists coming to Kashmir.

- Azad Sahib should not create obstructions in the path of those who are leading Kashmir to water crisis. It would be good for him to take no steps to save water resources of Jehlem and other streams lest our future generations have the good luck of breathing pure air and drinking pure water. Let these sources go the Dal way.

- Azad Sahib should not make any enquiry why despite producing 16000 MGW of electricity, the State invariably plunges into darkness. If the industries are not developing in the State, let them not. The students study under candle light and surgeons operate upon a patient under the light of a lantern. This makes no difference either to the chief minister or to us. Our patients can get treatment in European countries and our children study in Delhi or in foreign countries. So why to worry about lack of electricity or educational facilities?

- There is no need for Azad Sahib to know what is happening in educational institutes and why these are becoming business centers. Hence if a generation of Kashmiri Taliban comes to life in the State, let it be so.

- The files of poor, suffering, and needy people are collecting dust in offices and the secretariat as these have got bogged with red tape from the days of a grandfather to those of his great grandson. Did any grandchild or grandfather ever protest so that Azad Sahib would feel embarrassed?

- In the name of militancy a new method has been initiated, which sends many innocent people behind the bars. It does not matter much. In the

name of militancy, some corrupt officials are minting money. It should be of no concern to the chief minister.

Polythene bags so widely scattered in the valley have choked the waterways so much so that it becomes difficult for poor to breathe freely. Why Azad Sahib should stop use of polythene bags and thus force a couple of monopolists to close down their factories?

Political parties such as National Conference, Congress, and PDP besides influential citizens have illegally grabbed thousands of kanals of grazing land, custodian and state land. Azad Sahib should not touch them and if the younger generation yearns for a playing ground, that should not be a matter of any concern for. Let there be no playing grounds and let another generation prepare itself for militancy. It should be fine with Azad Sahib..

Azad Sahib is aware those two days prior to his taking the oath of office, the Standing Council made about two hundred fresh appointments. May he please have a look at that list? He will find the names of only the incompetent relatives of sitting ministers, former ministers, bureaucrats, senior officers and their henchmen included in the list. Can he do anything about it? No, certainly not. He may claim to be an all powerful chief minister but surely he can do nothing. Please calm down.

From obtaining water connection down the line to the digging of a grave, nobody would take a breath unless his palm is greased. One has to pay a bribe to the hospital staff for handing over a dead body to its relatives. Please do not create problems for this mischief - mongers of the State whose details I have given above. Create no hindrance in their work otherwise their job will remain unfinished. I am disposed to believe that in view of the complexion of the cabinet, which Azad Sahib has sworn in, some veteran friend or colleague of his has already doled out a piece of advice like the one I have in mind. Grapevine has it that such people have been inducted into the Council of Ministers as have previously indulged in general loot of state exchequer and that their kith and kin have risen from rags to riches.

Azad Sahib is advised not to poke nose in complicated matters stated

above failing which his image will get impressed on the minds of people. Since no one before him did anything like that he should follow their example. Two years have passed by since he assumed power and if he does not do anything out of established tradition, he will pass the remaining period in complete peace of mind. It is heartening to know that so far in these two years and two months Azad Sahib has strictly followed my suggestion. I am thankful to him. I am encouraged by his adroitness and am confident that in next ten months, which are still left to his ministry, he will stick to these suggestions tenaciously.

However he has full freedom to make tall claims on television, radio and in print media as his predecessors did. Did anybody question them till date? People's memory is short and why should anybody bother to question Azad Sahib?

Azad Sahib, May God secure you, your chief minister-ship, your ministers and your administration against the "blessings" of honest, sincere, oppressed, innocent, justice seeking people oppressed by corruption and high handedness so that your government successfully completes the tenure of three years precisely in a manner in which the preceding governments did?

14 Nov 2005

Did only sex scandals happen here?

For some time news of sex scandal is making rounds. In protest people come out on streets. Then there is silence. Anara Gupta sex scandal in Jammu brought to light names of a number of bigwigs. There was a great hullabaloo and then silence. However, in the process, some police officers became sacrificial goats. A storm was raised in connection with Sabina sex scandal in Srinagar. Sex exploitation of women is an old story in Kashmir but it has proliferated during past sixteen years. Some times girls are forced into matrimonial alliance at gun point, and at other time under the shadow of the gun both veil and wall are transgressed. Sisters, daughters and mothers of men in fetters and behind the bar have been molested in prison houses, and the allurement of finding a job has been the old ploy of sex exploitation in Kashmir.

In recent days a sex scandal has come to light in Kashmir. In this connection perhaps we have not played the role which we should have played. Way back in 2004, our party had begun a campaign against the cabin system in Srinagar restaurants. These were dark cells where the sexual abuse of innocent girls took its root. In our campaign against this evil we tried to bring it to the notice to all sections of society through our writings and through word. We got into touch with official machinery also. Not a blade of grass moved. Nobody had the vision to see the dangerous consequences of this social aberration. With the unveiling of this scandal, one may infer that entire Kashmir valley has become a replica of sex markets of Bangkok and European countries. A group of blackmailers has surfaced who sell their conscience in order to make quick money. Activists of this shameful group steal mobile numbers of respectable citizens and introduce themselves as member of CBI, press, TV, police officer or lawyer. They demand hundreds of thousands of rupees from these respectable families in order to remove the names of their members from the so-called list of people suspected of involvement in sex scandals.

The question is whether the people allegedly involved in evil doing have a

right to ask for legal defense or not? The foundation of a society rests on the judiciary and its organ of justice. A doctor treats a patient be he a criminal or an innocent person. This should be true of a lawyer as well. Refusing to plead a case of alleged sexual scandalizing is to push society to the verge of imposition of autocratic will. Is the decision of Bar Association to refuse fighting the case of alleged sexual aberration a wise and sensible one? Who is going to fight for those who are really innocent in this case? We shall have to appreciate the approach of the State High Court and the Chief Justice of our State. It is our good luck that we have an upright Chief Justice taking care of judiciary at the moment. He is indeed a Messiah for the people of Kashmir. He has demanded a probe into many glaring scandals and scams; he has called to account for degradation of Wular Lake, the scandal of Dal Lake, general loot of our forest wealth, illegal occupation of land and many other irregularities. But influential persons whose vested interests are adversely affected by the disposition of the Chief Justice are forming a nexus with the black sheep within the State administrative structure. It is to be seen whether they will succeed in preventing Honorable Chief Justice and the High Court from pushing reformative measures in the State.

This notwithstanding, should we as a nation depend entirely on the discretion of the High Court and not do what is desired of us as responsible citizens? Sex scandal is not the only malaise with which our society is best. Our hospitals are next to butcheries; our roads are presenting a sordid story; the drainage system around Dal lake has been given on contract to small and insignificant but favorite contractors to help them make big way. LWDA or the Srinagar Municipality is not answerable to anyone. Newly tarred roads get washed off by one or two rains just because sub standard material is used. A survey of allotment of Custodian lands will show that 99 per cent allotments have been made in favour of relatives and close associates of the Custodian General. If the Vigilance or the office of the Custodian sends a report to the Chief Minister or other ministers no action is taken.

In Nishat, Ishbar, a plot of land measuring about 30/40 kanals was used by the children of the locality as playing ground since many years. On 24 October 2005, the Custodian General allotted 9 kanals out of this plot to one Riyaz Bakhshi on the orders of Hakim Yasin, the Revenue Minister at

the rate of 4.5 lakh rupees per kanal. Three years ago the Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar had fixed the price of land in this locality at 20 lakh rupees per kanal.Local people protested against this act of favoritism and a PIL No. 573/05 has been filed in the High Court. A double Bench under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice even heard the case once. Apart from this, Ishbar People's Welfare Committee submitted an application to the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and Vigilance Commissioner that the plot of land is allotted to Sports Council and a Stadium constructed on it. No action has been taken so far but the SHO and Riyaz Bakhshi do not stop from intimidating and harassing the local people in whatever way they can, Even an FIR has been lodged against some youth who want the plot to be converted into sports stadium.

There are other alarming scandals related to the office of the Custodian General. A plot of land measuring 41 kanals in Zakura has been clandestinely grabbed by a relative of a high ranking officer in the Custodian General's office under the fictitious plea of having incepted a society there. Mr. G.M. Bhat, a leading advocate has filed a PIL about grabbing of two hundred kanals of land in the Shalimar area.

In Alamdar Colony of Chrar Sharief, 27 residential plots have been allotted not to the needy but to influential persons at a cost of 50,000 rupees per plot. The same plots have been sold through the third party for a sum of 2, 25000 rupees per plot. In another scandal in the same town, a sum of rupees 60 lakes was released from the state exchequer for raising a shopping complex. The fact is that money has been drawn but no shopping complex exists anywhere in the locality. This was disclosed by respectable citizens of Chrar Sharief to the Honorable Chief Justice in person who advised them to file a PIL.

Why is this general loot perpetrated in Kashmir? Are only those entitled to live and enjoy life in this land that are influential and close to the corridors of power? Should not Mr. Clean (the Chief Minister) ask for full record of allotments made from the Custodian and state lands since 1947 up to the present day? Justice demands that the Custodian and state lands are reclaimed and distributed among the poor people who have nothing to protect themselves from rain or sunshine. This will put an end to the slums in downtown Srinagar, and, at the same time, the government will

earn huge money out of a scheme of 5-marla allotment to the poor and the destitute.

Educational system is in a chaotic shape and unemployment among the youth has grown to the extent that they are on the verge of committing suicide. If anybody raises his voice to give vent to deprivations of the people, he is labeled terrorist anti-national and what not. Demonstration for fulfilling the requirements of a civic life is met with lathi charge and tear gas and finally the bullets. Will the dream of peace in Jammu and Kashmir be realized in these conditions?

3-june-2006

O YOU GUN ! BE DAMNED

- The gun authorised the Indian security forces to molest the walls and the veils of our homes.
- The gun rendered our mother, sister and daughters widows, and it turned our Children into orphans.
- The gun forced the widow's orphan's children to become baggers.
- The gun banished sincerity, discretion and decency from our society.
- The gun showed the Indian forces the path into our Homes.
- The gun facilitated the birth of the Ikhwanis and the Jihadis from the womb of destructions
- The gun has coined the terms like official gunman and the militant.
- The gun has laid down the tradition of creating forced and unwilling matrimonial alliances.
- The gun has promulgated amassing of illegal wealth through easy means.
- The gun has found the rationale for killing persons after sticking to them the label of an enemy agent and a traitor.
- The gun has wiped out age old communal harmony and replaces it by rank communalism.

- The gun has deprived innocent children of paternal affection and their loving smiles.
- The has hurled down human beings from the heights of humanism and made them beastly and barbaric.
- The gun has taken away the warmth in blood an has benumbed the sense of relationship.
- The gun has created the 'informers' and the 'sources'.
- The gun has given birth to brutal and uncontrolled forces like S.T.F.
- The gun has brought the environment to the brink of destruction and dilapidation.
- The gun has given rise to the barbaric practise of custodial killings.
- The gun has wrecked disaster to the economy of Kashmir.
- The threat of the gun and kidnapping has blocked the inflow of tourist in Kashmir.
- The gun has snatched away the sweetness of innocent childhood from the children.
- The gun has torched the school, collage and hospital buildings and bridges.
- The gun has pushed thousands of our young people into dark and dismal prison cells.
- The gun made our mothers and sisters cool their heels outside the prison gates to seize moments when they would have a look of their dear ones.

- The gun forced young people to remain interned for years without trial.

- The gun deprived the prisoners of many basic requirements of life as they remained behind the bars for years at end.

- The gun denied legal assistance to our youth, forcing them to remain behind the bars for years.

- The gun destroyed legal and justice system from top to bottom.

- The gun made the forces as the rulers of the land and gave them and station house officers full freedom of perpetrating illegal and oppressive acts.

- The gun creates an illegal protection law named AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) for security forces that they can beat and even kill anybody anywhere without reason and provocation.

- The gun gave a handle to fake Islamists who project Islam, the religion of peace and security, as a religion of oppression thus bringing disrespect to its fair name.

- The gun gave the freedom of destroying lush green forests of Kashmir and turning its land into ugly landscapes.

- The gun has spoilt the valuable water resources of the Dal and Wular lakes and the Jehlim river.

- The gun has converted the rule of the law into the rule of might is right.

- The gun has commercialised politics and replaced

sincere political workers by henchmen.

- The gun has provided space to the wily rulers, corrupt bureaucrats and members of short sighted security forces to do various illegal things under the cover of combating militancy and has given them the freedom of perpetrating tyranny and oppression. The gun has initiated the tradition of strikes. It has not only proven disastrous for our trade and commerce but has also developed the habit of shunning work.

- The gun has brought disruptions of our education system. It has ushered in an era of ignorance and retardation.

- The gun has provided opportunity to a few so-called leaders to amass millions and obtain privileged professional training in medicine, engineering and business for their wards and close associates all at the cost of the dead bodies of helpless Kashmir's.

- The gun has provided the license of killing innocent people.

- The gun played with the modesty of our respectful women folk.

- The gun has helped the rulers to obtain huge funds through blackmail in the name of development and them misappropriate these and thus perpetrate general loot of the exchequer.

- The gun has desecrated the purity and piety of worshipping places and rendered their disrespect a general phenomenon.

- The gun has banished millions of people from their homes,habitats, streets, friends and associates.

- The gun has brought destruction and hunger to each

house and habitat.

- The gun has spread fear among the journalists and forced them from telling the truth.

- The gun has provided safe haven to some of the journalists who have compromised with journalistic etiquette and thus tarnished the image of impartial journalism.

- The gun has popularised personal vendetta behind the cloak of law. Taking recourse to relevant anti-militancy clauses, has ragged people to the interrogation cells and prison.

- The gun-toting men have become the judge, the jury and the executioner.The gunmen have become self-made Qadi and judge and have pronounced death sentences against people as they liked.

- The gun has imposed death sentence on the sentiment of respect for humanism.

- The gun has turned the mujahid of yesterday into an Ikhwani, informer and source and thus made him an instrument of getting his colleagues nabbed along with arms, and ammunition.

- The gun has shown the commanders,chief commanders and others of their ilk to seek shelter behind politics but to the wards of the poor and ordinary Kashmir's, they are teaching the lessons of jihad in order to establish their leadership.

- The miracle of the gun turned paupers into multi-millionaires and the vice versa.

- The gun has turned lanes, streets and localities into graveyards.

- The gun brought in the practise of disappearing people after they are arrested.

- The gun and gun powder has turned our freedom struggle into a terrorist movement on international level.

- The gun has brought to fore a new class in our society that indulges in collecting funds in the mosques, in Arabian, European and American countries on the dead bodies of our young men and pose as the servants of the community. The huge funds thus amassed have been diverted for making the careers of their wards.

- The gun made the miracle of a few so-called leaders apportioning the medical seats and stipends from Iran and Pakistan to their own wards and relatives.

- The gun consumed many a bright intellectuals and men of learning including the genius like Dr. Guru.

- The gun caused desecration to Hazratbal shrine and sent the shrine of Sheikh Nurudin (Nund Rishi) to flames.

- The gun managed to get the heads of people smashed sometimes in the 'crime' of supporting self-determination and sometimes in supporting accession. Many a time the accessionists jumped at he throats of their co-ideologues in the name of administrative superiority.

- The gun brought death to the astute scholar and nobleman like Maulavi Farooq,It consumed a learned man like Qazi Nisar.

- The fear of gun forced our Pandit brethren to leave their native land Kashmir only to face innumerable suffering in exile.Their story of privations is heart-

rending.

- The gun turned the law as a whip for the poor and comfort for the rich.
- The gun opened a myriad of ways for corruptions.
- The gun saw the real culprits as ruling force and innocent and poor people huddled behind the bars.
- The gun wretched the age old tradition of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among the people of Kashmir. It asunder the colourful cultural mosaic of this land.
- The gun sent innumerable youth into their icy and snowy graves over the forbidding mountains without the shroud and death rites.
- The gun made a large segment of population as the brokers of death and violence.
- The symbolises destruction and violence that consumes development. It transforms beauty into ugliness.
- The gun has forced the daughter of Eve to find its honour shredded into pieces out of helplessness, poverty, need and fear.
- The gun encourages the forces to built bunkers in lanes, streets, squares and everywhere.
- The gun dispensed with even the normal respect for womenfolk in the society.
- The gun and gun powder did not spare even the kids.
- The gun wrought the greatest misery on women folk.

Her son, her brother, her husband And her father all became the victims of the gun. She was targeted for sprinkling of acid thus adducting the meaning of oppression to Islam.

Gun! Why didn't you get gunned down? Why didn't the death dance brought by you meet its own annihilation?

Attack on Tourists, Bombay Blasts And Probable Consequences ?

Tourists are as good as guests. This is a universally accepted norm. The Prophet gave much importance to showing hospitality to guests. The Qur'an emphatically instructs to show courtesy to guests. Shaykhu'l-Alam says:

Sahib Saet chooey paneh mehmanas
Tasenzeh lohlareh . . . .

(Translation: A guest carries with him the divine self
To show him hospitality is to seek God's good will
Musulmans should love all forms of Adams progeny)

Treatment meted out to foreigners reflects the culture of a people. If the guest comes in the shape of a tourist, he provides spine for the economy of the region.

Since last sixteen years, Kashmir's economy has met with a serious setback. People connected with tourist industry like houseboat owners, hoteliers, craftsmen and shopkeepers have suffered in their business. Absence of source of sustenance has exacerbated social problems. Owing to relentless unemployment young boys and girls have come to the verge of committing suicide. Trade is connected with income and for income tourism is the major industry in our state. Targeting tourists appears to be a conspiracy of strangulating the economic life line of the state. Attacking people coming on a pilgrimage is a well - conceived conspiracy not only against the Muslims of the State but also against the Muslims of India. What can be its probable consequences? This question can be debated and difference of opinion can arise. But national interests and the interests of Muslim community demand that I shed some light on it. In doing so, some circles might label it as premature as they did earlier in some other instances.

With the outbreak of militancy local militants did not initially target the tourists. Kashmiris traditionally believe in seeing that a tourist is safe. It is so because they are aware that their economy and their honour depend on how a tourist is treated. But some such elements found entry into the armed movement of Kashmir as refused to understand our tradition and culture. In their quest for cheap publicity, they made all those elements their target that may have brought publicity to them but disaster to our movement and sacrifices. When the world saw the gory picture of brutally severed trunk of the Norwegian tourist, it shuddered. He with his four co-travellers was kidnapped by Al Faran organization in Kashmir. It is said that the dead bodies of other four tourists remained untraceable on the behest of a foreign agency, which apprehended more negative impact of innocent killings.

Our movement was the movement of oppressed and subjugated people; people to whom promises were made and then broken. It was a movement of the people on whom New Delhi had thrust its agents and perpetrated oppression in more than one way. It was the movement of those people for whom the institutions of justice were paralysed. But alas, when in the course of a struggle of the oppressed people they appear as oppressors, then all over the world our movement was labeled a terrorist movement. The Vice-Chancellor of the University, doctors, intellectuals, ulema, and civil servants were kidnapped and brutally killed.

Pilgrims of any faith receive protection everywhere in the world. Their religious sentiments are shown full respect. During their pilgrimage to holy places, the local government and civil society provide them all facilities. In 1993 a handful of terrorists attacked and seized the premises of Mecca. But in spite of the fact that God has disallowed killing and violence within the sanctum sanctorum of Ka'aba, the Saudi government ordered counter attack in which the terrorists were gunned down. No government would permit a holy shrine to be used for political purpose. What is the political, religious or moral justification for attacking the pilgrims to Amarnath or to Vaishnov Devi? If a kith or a kin of the murdered pilgrim or somebody from Hindu extremist group meets out same treatment to the Muslim Hajj pilgrims from India, where do we the Muslims then stand? What will be the justification for people of different faiths to live together in amity in India and particularly in Kashmir? Where shall this inhuman act of

bloodshed stop?

In contemporary times no country can live in isolation. Globalization has turned the world into a small village. If nobody buys our manpower and our goods, we too shall not be in opposition to buy comforts from other people. If we continue our brutal attacks on foreigners, nobody will allow us to visit their country. The tourists work hard and save some money to enjoy traveling abroad. It is a harsh reality that by killing the tourists, Indian rule over the state will not be undone: it will not help throw out such a large Indian army from Kashmir. What then is the objective and agenda of external abettors of violence in Kashmir against the tourists? Maoists are active in Nepal yet they have not raised hand against the tourists visiting that country. Thousands of Kashmiri students are enrolled in different educational institutions of India. They are receiving education and training and will be an asset to our state after they complete their studies. If the sense of revenge is stirred among the Indians, the lives of thousands of Kashmiri students studying in Indian institutions will be in peril. No Kashmiris student will feel safe to go to any Indian educational or professional institute for higher education. And who will be the ultimate looser? Thousands of Kashmiri businessmen are spread out in different parts of India to earn a living. If out of a sense of revenge they are driven out and forced to close their business concerns, what effect will it have on the livelihood of thousands of families in Kashmir? Thousands of poor Kashmiri labourers migrate to different towns and cities of India during winter to earn two square meals. Any violence against the pilgrims in Kashmir can have its reaction in those cities and the lives of these migratory labourers will be in danger.

Obviously the result of attacks on pilgrims will be that our state will be cut off from the rest of the world. Its repercussions on our economy will be disastrous and our tourist industry will die a premature death. Let us not speak about its adverse results in terms of communal strife in India from which the Muslims will suffer maximum loss. They are still nursing the deep wounds which partition inflicted on them in 1947. They are struggling hard to rebuild their social, economic and educational fabric. We know that some sections of Hindu extremists still nurse the grudge that Muslims were responsible for the partition of India.

Exclusive attacks on tourists on July 11 at Abi Guzar, Lal Chowk, Dalgate, Regal Chowk and Tourist Centre and also in Gulmarg are undoubtedly the sequel to a pre-planned conspiracy to paralyses Kashmir. The Muslims are suspected of involvement in follow up of Bombay blasts like attacks on temples, on Indian Parliament and the Red Fort. Those who allege these acts as the handiwork of Muslims begin to call themselves experts and rush to the TV to assert a link between SIMI and Lashkar/Jayshe Muhammad. Sometimes it appears to be part of a conspiracy to incite the Hindu extremists. In order to scuttle such a big conspiracy, the first thing to do is to insist upon Indian ruling circles not to hold an entire community responsible for these reprehensible acts. The roots of this conspiracy lie outside India and with those who are keen to see communal riots consuming India in its flames. If they use a Kashmiri or an Indian Muslim to help them achieve this nefarious objective, we shall not call him a Muslim; he is a terrorist and a terrorist has no religion. This is possible only when official circles, media and the masses in India make sure that indulging in such crimes is the result of a conspiracy hatched against the country, and it is their duty to see that the conspiracy is blasted. In order to achieve success in this mission, it is important that the police, intelligence agencies and security staff demonstrate extraordinary vigilance. No innocent person should be harassed and no self-styled expert should be permitted to spread hatred against any community or group.

The person who hurled a bomb on the Tourist Centre in Srinagar was overpowered by the people on spot. The people in Tangmarg and Gulmarg came out in large numbers to protest against attacks on tourists. In Ganderbal, a strike was observed in protest against hurling a grenade in the market, which wounded several innocent people. Those who have adopted the policy of double - speak should take these incidents of public reaction as a writing on the wall. On one hand they hold demonstrations, strikes and condolence meetings for the death of somebody from their side but on the other hand they are tight lipped about the killing of an innocent person from among the masses. This is not going to continue for a long time where lives and interests of the masses are involved.

The people should come out in protest against such elements as want to stoke the flames of violence against tourists, pilgrims, people with

different religious views and civil servants. Unless upright political groups, social institutions, commercial and industrial organizations, student communities studying in different educational institutions inside and outside the State, women students, lawyers and all sections of civil society rise against these elements, our movement for rights and freedom will be lost in blind alleys. We shall have nothing but disaster to hand down as legacy to our future generations has been the case with the present generation. If we continue to shut our mouth from speaking against violence and killing of innocent persons, we must be prepared to face some unprecedented calamity as the result of the law of nature. Is it not the word of Allah that killing an innocent person is tantamount to killing entire humanity? Tolerating oppression is a bigger sin than oppressing others.

Terrorist bomb blasts in Kashmir have met with very adverse reaction throughout the world. G-8 Summit condemned it; the Secretary level meeting between India and Pakistan scheduled for 21 July has been called off by India. On Bombay blasts, the statement of Pakistan's foreign minister that blasts will continue as long as Kashmir issue is not resolved, is politically, diplomatically and ethically uncalled for. More than two hundred persons were killed and about a thousand wounded in these blasts. A country politicking human deaths is inviting severe censure from the world community. The two countries have been struggling hard to hold on to the confidence building process for last two years. People of the sub-continent in general and those in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in particular had great hopes in this process; they expected flow of trade and opening of roads and greater interaction among the people. That could have helped remove entrenched doubts and suspicions with the result that the possibility of resolving Kashmir issue could become possible. But it appears that the plans of terrorist organizations are gaining ground. My sources have informed me that a terrorist organization, commenting on growing relations between India and Pakistan, and the prospect of opening links across LOC in J&K said, "If this goes on and the people of Kashmir, India and Pakistan travel without any hindrance and trade flourishes, then not only will hatred against India come to an end but people will also forget Kashmir issue. Therefore we shall have to sabotage Indo-Pak peace process in any case."

India and Pakistan need to be alert at this point of time. Three-year long peace process should not be allowed to get derailed by these bomb blasts. Kashmir's will have to rise against this terror, failing which we may lose our good name and our noble traditions. Our future generations will be destroyed in recurrent bomb blasts. It is our duty to warn local leadership and the masses of people that we are getting increasingly isolated day after day and if this continues to happen then we are heading towards a deep and abysmal chasm.

24-july-2006

Is J&K a natural part of Pakistan or India?

In a discussion last week a rabid pro-Pakistani and chairman of one faction of the Hurriyat Conference argued that Kashmir's accession to Pakistan was justified because of its seven hundred kilometers long common border with that country. Hence, Kashmir was natural part of Pakistan, he maintained. Many more people including units of both factions of the Hurriyat who want Kashmir's accession with Pakistan, find a strong rationale in Pakistan's two nation theory as the basis of Kashmir ---- a predominantly Muslim region --- acceding to Pakistan. This can cause confusion to the present and the future generations of the Kashmiris. Therefore, it is desirable that in the context of making J&K State a part of Pakistan or Hindustan, some facts of history are brought forward.

Five thousand-year-old history of Kashmir tells us that this state remained independent and self-ruling under various Rajas, Maharajas, Nawwabs, and Emperors. During Shahmiri rule, its borders extended from the Tibet in the north to Sir Hind and Multan in the south. However, owing to internal dissensions, its sovereignty came to an end with its conquest by Emperor Akbar in A.D. 1586. After the Mughals, Kashmir passed into the hands of the Afghans, Sikhs and lastly the Dogras. It is necessary to recollect that prior to the emergence of Pakistan movement Kashmiris had begun their struggle to liberate their land from autocratic rule of Dogras. Kashmir freedom movement was launched in 1931, at least nine years earlier than the 1940 Lahore Resolution, later on called Pakistan Resolution.

Independence Act of 1947 stipulated passing of Muslim majority areas to Pakistan and Hindu majority areas to India in the territory of British India. 560 princely states were not a part of British India administered territory

though they had taken the oath of loyalty to the British Crown. In this way they had maintained a semblance of their semi - independent status. With the winding up of the Raj, these princely states automatically became independent. However, in accordance with Section 7 of the Independence Act, it was recommended that the states should take into account their geographical location and the wishes of the majority population to decide accession either to India or to Pakistan. The option of remaining independent too was there. Thus India and Pakistan came into being as two sovereign states of the sub-continent on the basis of Independence Act but the formula of passing the territories of 560 princely states to India or Pakistan on the basis of Hindu/ Muslim majority was not applied. If so happened that the question of accession of these princely states became a source of dispute between the two countries. In the process, Kashmir dispute proved a hindrance not only to the development and prosperity of India and Pakistan but it also became a source of great misery and suffering for the people of the State. Some questions arise"

- Why did the Muslim League, in a meeting of its Executive Committee, concede to the rulers of the princely states the right of deciding the future of their respective states?

- Why did Pakistan accept the announcement of accession of Junagarh and Manawa to Pakistan despite the fact that the majority population in both the states was of Hindus?

- Did not Pakistan accept constitutional status (independence) of Jammu and Kashmir by accepting the stand-still agreement with the Maharaja of Kashmir?

- The State of Hyderabad is not physically contiguous to Pakistan. It has Hindu majority population.Yet did not Pakistan accept the announcement of its self-rule status mad by the Nawwab?

The point is that if the princely states too had been distributed according to the Muslim and non-Muslim majority theory at the time of the partition, Mr Jinnah would never have accepted the offer of accession of Junagarh and Manawa to Pakistan, nor would he have accepted the sovereignty of Hyderabad Deccan. A statement issued by Mr. Jinnah on 17 June 1947

and preserved in the archives of that country· according to the Pakistani Minister of Information and Broadcasting endorses our view point. It says"

These days conflicting opinions are expressed in regard to the Indian princely states. It has, therefore, become necessary for me to explain the view point of All India Muslim League on this issue. I would like to clarify misunderstandings and state what our strategy about these states will be. From constitutional and legal point of view, Indian princely states become independent with the termination of the British Raj. They will be free to make a decision about their future or to find a way of remaining independent. Their options are to join the constitutional assembly of India or Pakistan or decide to remain independent. In case they decide to remain independent, they can maintain their relations with India or Pakistan as they deem fit. The Muslim League's policy in this regard has been very clear from the beginning, and that is not to interfere in the internal matters of any state. This matter should fundamentally remain between the ruler and his subjects. Such states as want to remain independent but would like to talk to Pakistan on any matter or some political understanding or any other sort of relationship like trade, economic etc. we shall agree to exchange ideas with them.

My candid opinion is that the Cabinet Mission Memorandum of 12 May, in which the policy of the British Government has been set forth, does not impose any restriction on them. Generally but wrongly it is said that the states have only one option of joining one or the other constitutional assembly. In my opinion if they want to remain independent they can do so. Neither the British government nor the British parliament can force them to do something against their free will. They do not have any power or authority to do so.

After meeting with two Muslim Conference leaders, Chowdhury Hamidullah Khan and Muhammad Ishaque Qureshi, the Qaid Azam issued a press statement on 11 July 1947 that dealt with Kashmir situation. It said: "I have more than once made it clear that the Indian states are free to join either Pakistan or India or remain independent." He repeated it on 30 July 1947: "Muslim League has no intention of bringing any pressure on the states to adopt any particular course of action." He added: "The legal situation is that with the transfer of power and

termination of sovereignty, Indian states will automatically regain their full independent status. As such they will be free either to join one or the other dominion or to remain independent." As a man of principles, Qaide Azam had adopted a stand that was in conformity with the situation that emerged after the termination of the British rule over India. He did not make religion, majority/minority or geographical proximity etc. a criterion for the states to decide their future. The two - nation theory was applicable only to the provinces governed by the Raj. This is why he accepted the accession papers of Junagarh and Manawa rulers despite the fact that these were Hindu majority states. Likewise, he accepted the declaration of independence made by the Nawwab of Hyderabad despite the fact that its border was not contiguous to Pakistan. In the light of this policy (of Mr. Jinnah), the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir sent a telegram to the head of Pakistan State Relations Department, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar on 12 August 1947 saying:

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir desires to enter into a standstill agreement with Pakistan on such matters as exist between the State and the British Government at the moment. We propose that the arrangements existing today would continue to be the same with Pakistan till a fresh agreement is concluded with your government.In his reply he said:

The Government of Pakistan has received your telegram on 21 August. In regard to a standstill agreement, the Government of Pakistan agrees to continue the agreements, which exist between the states and the British government

By accepting this agreement, Pakistan formally recognized the constitutionally independent status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. A similar telegram had been sent to the Indian government, and the reply was: "The Government of India would be pleased if a minister or some formal authority is deputed to talk to us on the stand - still agreement so that earlier agreements and administrative arrangements continue." However, it did not become a formal agreement.

On 18 October 1947, the Prime Minister of Jammu & Kashmir sent a telegram to the Governor General of Pakistan. He said:"Despite a stand-

still agreement that came into effect with the termination of the British rule, many difficulties have been created for his state. The system of civil supplies like, petrol, oil, food, salt, sugar and textiles etc. From West Punjab routes has collapsed; saving bank accounts have been closed and West Punjab banks are not honouring the cheques issued in their name. Imperial Bank declines to release our credits. Vehicles registered in the state are stopped in Rawalpindi, and the railway traffic between Sialkot and Jammu has been suspended despite the fact that state authorities have offered safe passage to a hundred thousand Muslims wanting to travel from Pathankot to Sialkot. As against this, out of 220 state nationals proceeding to Kashmir via Kohala, 180 were brutally massacred. Thousands of men from Pakistan armed with latest weapons have entered Poonch area. They have resorted to large scale killing and loot of non-Muslim population there and they are molesting women. Yet in spite of all this, Pakistani media has unleashed propaganda in which it tries to bring onus of these depravities to our door step. Actually these atrocities are perpetrated with tacit understanding and full knowledge of the Government of Pakistan."

When riots escalated, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir sent a letter to Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India on 26 October 1947 bringing to his notice the current situation in the State. He requested for support from India and along with this request, sent to him the Instrument of Accession. Next day the Governor General sent his reply in which he indicated acceptance of the Instrument of Accession. Reacting to Maharaja's request for military assistance, the Governor General wrote: "Meanwhile in response to Your Highness's appeal for military aid, action has been taken today to send troops of the Indian army to Kashmir to help your own forces to defend your territory and to protect the lives, property and honour of your people"

Keeping the documentary evidence, statements of Qaide Azam and the events of contemporary history in view, it is clear that accession of the states did not take place on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim factor. Needless to remind that the stalwarts of the Jama'at-e Islami of those days like Maulana Mowdoodi, the Indian Muslim ulema and most of religious groups were opposed to the division of India because they believed that division of India actually meant division of Indian Muslims.

What do we know of the Muslims of the sub-continent today: they are divided and further divided into 20 crores in India, 15 crores in Pakistan and 20 crores in Bangladesh making up a total of 55 crores? They would have been the holders of half of the total ruling power of united India in which there would have been outright Muslim rule in the regions of Pakistan, Kashmir and Bangladesh as it is today.

The next point is about the borders. One fails to see any logic in the assertion that a region having contiguous border with another region or country should become its part. If we accept this logic then Canada and the US, Mexico and the US, Russia and China, Mongolia and Russia and many Arab countries should be part of one another on the basis of their long common border. Then Nepal should be a part of India or India a part of Nepal. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir it is not correct to say that J&K is a dispute between India and Pakistan. The truth is that it is an issue between the people of that State, and the Governments of Pakistan and India in regard to the freedom of the J&K State. It is an issue between the people of J&K State and the Government of China about that stretch of State territory, which the Government of Pakistan has gifted to China, and also the portion of the territory China grabbed after India's defeat in Indo-China war of 1962.

India took Kashmir case to the UN on January 1, 1948. It was not only on the basis of State's accession but also on the basis of Stand-still Agreement and the right of the States to remain independent. It was this basis which made Pakistan agree to the 13 August 1948 Security Council Resolution Part II that the situation had changed in the State of Jammu and Kashmir owing to the presence of Pakistani troops there. Part A of the Resolution sates:

> Pakistan will withdraw all its troops from J&K State.
>
> Government of Pakistan undertakes to use its influence to recall the tribesmen and Pakistani nationals from the State of J&K who have entered the State for the purpose of fighting.
>
> until a final solution is found, the Government of J&K will hold the administration of areas through local authority.

Part B states:

- India commits that after Pakistani forces, tribal and Pakistani nationals leave the State, and a bulk of the Indian forces wil l gradually leave the State.

- Till the final settlement, Indian government will maintain minimum number of troops with the consent of the Commission to assist local law and order authority.

- Indian government ensures that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir will take all necessary steps to protect law and order, and political and human rights of the people. According to Part C of the Resolution, both governments agree that a decision made by the people of the Sate will be acceptable to them.

On January 5, 1949, the Government of Pakistan submitted a draft resolution before the UN that the question of accession of J&K State with either India or Pakistan should be decided through a fair plebiscite. The UN observed that plebiscite should take place only after the recommendations made in Part A and B of the 13 August 1948 Resolution is implemented. The Commission should be convinced that peace has returned to the State of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistani troops, tribesmen and armed persons have left the State.

The position is that neither India nor Pakistan acted on the recommendations of the resolution. Furthermore, in the UN Resolution of January 5, 1949, the Government of Pakistan introduced an amendment seeking replacement of term "Kashmir issue" by "Pakistan and India dispute over Kashmir". This resolution actually deprived us (Kashmiris) of our right to national freedom but gave the right to choose our master. This is not acceptable to a large majority of Kashmiris.

Now Kashmir issue is not only an indication of enmity between the two countries but accession of the State or its division on the basis of religion is nothing short of a suicide for the people of J&K State and the sub-continent at large. As such, taking into view the interests of the people of

Jammu and Kashmir, the desire for prosperity and development of India and Pakistan and also the principles established by Qaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in regard to the princely states, there is only one solution to Kashmir issue. The original state from Gilgit to Lakhanpore should be re-united not on clan or religious basis but on the basis of a federation of nationalities living in the state. Each unit should have its autonomous status with no discrimination on the basis of the size. No region will have ascendancy on any other region. Within the federation, all regions and units will enjoy freedom and self rule on the basis of equality. Only an independent and self-ruling federal state can promote cordial and friendly relations between India and Pakistan.

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru repeatedly promised to the people of Jammu and Kashmir from various platforms, that Kashmir enjoyed a unique position and that its people will come out with their final and decisive decision about its future. Kashmir is not a gift either for India or for Pakistan. People forget that the State is not a saleable commodity or which can be transacted.

Indian authorities should not forget the promises made by their outstanding leader. These promises made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir should be implemented. We want to put an end to ignorance and poverty among the people in India and Pakistan and we want an era of development and prosperity dawn on the entire sub-continent.

04-Sep-2006

Can Kashmir issue be resolved through talks with militant organizations?

"It takes two to discuss truth: one who utters it and one who understands it" (Khaleel Gibran)

I am taking up a topic, which politicians on either side of the divide enjoy to drag in for discussion but only to create more confusion among people. In recent days, some politicians have been making a loud noise of solving Kashmir issue by talking to militant organizations like Hizbul Mujahedeen, and Lashkar-e Taiyyaba and Jayshe Muhammad. Foremost among them are Mufti Saeed, Mehbooba Mufti, and Hakim Yasin. Ever since Omar Abdullah met with General Pervez Musharraf, he too has tuned in. Farooq Abdullah did not lag behind. Amusingly, those pleading for talks are not only the supporters of accession with India but have also tasted power and authority in Kashmir. The point is not whether talks should or should not be held with the militants. Talks are always welcome and very beneficial for human beings. The point is whether Kashmir issue will be solved by holding talks with Hizbul Monahan?

This organizations thoughts and ideology are rooted in the ideology of Jama'at-e Islami. Hizb's constitution and manifesto both declare accession of entire J&K State to Pakistan as its goal. Its base camps, financial assistance, strategy, and training, in short its very existence and continuance of armed struggle depends entirely on the support provided to it by the Government of Pakistan. The proof is the decision of the Liberation Front and many other local militant organizations of abandoning arms. At one time, these organizations were also supported by Pakistan. When that was denied, the organizations dried up and most of them vanished.

Are those, who vociferously demand talks with the Hizb, sincere in what they ask for? Let us not forget that in the past these people did not



Police inspector dragging Hashim Qureshi,
While Junaid Qureshi is arguing with Police Inspector during
peaceful protest against Shopion twin Rape and Murder case.



On the Human rights Day
JKDLP Leaders and activists Protest against Death sentens



Shabir Shah,Abas Ansari and Hashim Qureshi



From left Madam Lizlin Member of European parliament,
Hashim Qureshi and M. Y. Tarigami, during a
Kashmir conference session in Belgium

suggest eradication of militancy by launching an attack on Azad Kashmir and taking the militants captive. They suggested outright killing of them. Power hungry politicians have always adopted double standards. In Delhi they talk what suits the bosses there, and inPakistan they talk what is music to the ears of Pakistani authorities. In Kashmir, they play monkey games. Some among these politicians have been cohorts with gun-wielding youth in Kashmir who perpetrated atrocities on innocent people or played with the honour and modesty of respectable women. They left no stone unturned to kill the very soul of Kashmiris.

These politicians think that Kashmiris have short memory. That is why they are glad to create confusion among them only to reach the corridors of power. Sometimes they show green kerchief and rock salt to the people: at other times they visit the close relatives of a martyr and shed crocodile's tears to win their sympathy. Now they are orchestrating the mantra of self-rule and internal autonomy etc. Without giving due thought to the subject, they are vociferous in their demand of holding talks with the Hizbul Mujahedeen.

Who does not know that the ideological base of the Hizb or any other militant organization stands not only on accession to Pakistan but their very existence depends on the support of the rulers of Pakistan, administration of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan? Actually they live on the soil of Pakistan. Those who demand that talks with the Hizb should be held on the pattern of talks with the Naga rebels in a foreign land, should know that in Nagaland, NLG controls 40 to 45 per cent of the land, and it has provided a dependable administrative system to the people in controlled areas. They are asking for total independence of Nagaland and not for accession to any neighbouring country. Naturally, whenever they hold talks, they will talk without any external pressure. Will the Hizb talk to India without the consent and agreement of Pakistan? Previously when Ahsan Dar, the Hizb's operational chief announced cease fire, he was on record having said that he was talking with the consent of Salahu'd-Din. These talks were abruptly stopped, and, in the process, Dar lost his life. Agreeing that Hizb will talk to the Indians but will they demand anything less than accession to Pakistan? And will India accept their demand?

Talks can be held only if Hizb is prepared to give up demand for

accession to Pakistan. Salahu'd-Din and Hizb, both, have repeatedly said that before talks begin India should accept that Kashmir is a disputed territory and stop claiming Kashmir an inseparable part of India. Only one change is visible from Indian side. They have agreed to talk to anybody unconditionally. If out of some wishful thinking we imagine that Hizb will agree to talk to the Indians, in that case it will have to obtain green signal from Pakistan; and the green signal will come only when the Hizb puts its foot down on accession to Pakistan. And if deviating from its basic views and demand, Hizb agrees to conclude a deal with India in which eventuality it will ask for power sharing in the Indian administered Kashmir, then Pakistan will stop aiding it. Not only that, Pakistan will see to it that other active militant organizations like LeT and JM liquidate the Hizb just as Pakistan contrived liquidation of Liberation Front through Hizb. JKLF had ultimately to abandon arms..

Obviously, neither Hizb nor the Indian government is prepared to bend backwards from their respective stands.Hence there appears no possibility of any dialogue taking place. Suppose a dialogue does take place and the Hizb withdraws from its stand, accepts India's position and agrees to call a day to militancy, this can happen only when it severs all connection with Pakistan. The question is this: will the activities of militancy come to a final halt in Kashmir after the Hizb eschews militancy? I don't think so. Organizations like the LeT and Jaysh are not only pro-active in Kashmir but have also spread their tentacles in many major cities of India. They have the capacity to strike in other cities as they did in Bombay and Delhi. Armed separatists receive ideology, financial support and arms from Pakistan. Apart from Hizb, other militant organizations have mostly Pakistanis and a few foreigners in their rank and file.

Truth is always bitter, and I have suffered and may suffer more for telling the truth. One of the truths is that the tragedy of militancy in Kashmir may not come to an end unless India shows her large heartedness by fulfilling the promises she has made to Kashmiris. They must be given the right of self determination. India should stop wasting time in conducting sham talks with the Hurriyat, which is patently a pro-Pakistan organization and supports Kashmir's accession to that country. It should also stop floating rumours of holding talks with the Hizbul Mujahedeen, which means

nothing less than befooling Kashmiris. We also find that while on one hand Pakistani rulers are demonstrating flexibility on Kashmir on the other they see to it that militant organizations remain intact in Kashmir. They keep control of the graph of violence in order to ensure their weight in the scales of a dialogue. Therefore, this is the time that the two countries solve their mutual problems like two gentlemen and not play in the hands of agencies.

Digression from the theme is not advisable. But in passing, permit me to make a comment about Muzaffar Hussain Beg. He is an intelligent person, and we regret the treatment meted out to him and the manner in which he was divested of power. In my opinion, the lament of an innocent girl named Kulsum finished him. Human Rights Commissioner had recommended financial assistance of one and a half lakh of rupees in her favour to meet expenses of medical treatment. I personally handed over the order of Justice Parey to Muzaffar Hussain Beg, and he had promised to get the amount released in favour of the acid victim. Her face had been burnt when acid was thrown on her. The girl's father died because of agony of his victimised daughter. Alas, Beg Sahib did not fulfill his promise! May be God Almighty heard the lament of the girl.

Let me conclude this write-up once again with the words of Khaleel Gibran: "He who listens to truth is not less than he who utters the truth.

18-Sept-2006

Is the US arbiter of our destiny?

The cat is out of bag` General Musharraf walks in the footsteps of post 9/11 US. His decisions and actions are what Washington wants. He has joined hands with the US in latter's fight against Taliban --- a painful decision for the people of Pakistan. Should a Pakistani soldier be called martyr if he gets killed in fighting Taliban? The US has invariably supported military rulers or military supported unpopular political leaders only to grab power in countries which are crucial to her interests.

In the middle of last century, the US engineered anti-Masada coup in Iran. It helped in the return of the monarch. The US gave support to military rulers after getting President Soekarno ousted in Indonesia. Zulfikar Bhutto was not only removed from premiership but also sent to gallows. General Zia was used in Afghanistan for 13 long years against Soviet Union. After Russia's withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US forgot Pakistan as if they hardly knew each other. Thanks to Osama bin Laden and the Taliban that the US had once again the need of Pakistan on her side. Once Nawaz Sharief, the popular leader was removed from power, General Musharraf found himself on the same wavelength with his predecessor General Zia. But why to stop there? Blood of thousands of Muslims was easily shed in Iran – Iraq war. When Iraq's dictator Saddam Husain ordered dropping of chemical bombs on Kurds killing thousands of them, neither the US nor any European country raised its finger. American and Israeli weapons were supplied to be used against Iran. Today, Saddam is a prisoner of the Americans, and is facing charges of dropping chemical bombs on Kurds. When the US needed services of President Norega of Panama, he was brought on the pay roll of CIA. But when he took a position against the US, American troops entered Panama and arrested him and gave him life imprisonment by cooking up a drug story against him.

But what an irony? Islamic extremists, once zealously promoted and

supported in war against Soviet Union through the instrumentality of General Zia, are now sought to be curbed and decimated through the new avatar, General Pervez Musharraf.The way in which the Americans promoted "Islamic extremists" during Zia era is fully described by ISI's former Deputy Director, Brigadier Yusuf in his book The Beer Trap. Americans had gone to the length of printing copies of the Qur'an in CIA press for distribution in Russia, opening religious seminaries to prepare Jehadis against Russia, and supplying Israel-made weapons to the Jihadis by removing their made in Israel labels. Resources mobilized to decimate the "Islamic extremists" today are hundredfold larger than those used to create them.

America is not Almighty, the reason being that even small countries have pinned her down. The US had to eat the humble pie in a conflict with Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini; in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, she had to lick the dust; CIA met with humiliation in Costa Rica in 1956; Washington's daily threats to Iran and Syria have become a big joke. Venezuela, a small country in the neighborhood of the US, is up and defiant to protect her sovereignty and her rich energy resources. The US is used to swallow bitter pills and can intimidate only such countries as are weak. The Gulf States reeling under monarchies and autocracies sustained in their power and position by American arms and militaries, have surrendered their rich oil and mineral resources to the US and her allies. Only future historians will tell what a serious blow General Musharraf has dealt to Pakistani nation by timidly acquiescing to the US. Who except the feudal lords, military junta and the elite in Pakistan supports General Musharraf in his pro-American policy? It is unfortunate that Pakistan became an ally of American imperialism soon after it came into existence. In 1970, its army then under Brigadier Ziau'l-Haq (later President) became a mercenary army in Jordan operating against Constantinopolitans.

Imperialists are not only exploiting the Muslims all over the world but after subjecting the economy of poor countries --- especially the Muslim countries --- to their self interests, they are also affixing the label of "terrorists" to them. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon, Muslim blood is shed with impunity. Now a hate campaign is unleashed against the Muslims through the instrumentality of the Pope in Rome.

The question is this:is this very America going to solve the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan? Will those who project themselves as leaders of Kashmiri people, and under the pretext of medical treatment for headache enjoy trips to the US and meet with the PRO in the State Department ---with whom anybody can meet at any time --- came back and befool their compatriots by conveying to them "the good news of American support" to Kashmir cause, be able to solve the Kashmir issue? What concrete steps did the US or the OIC take till date to redeem the problems of Kashmiris? Far from solving the Palestinian question, OIC could not muster support for Hizbullah against the attacks of Israel.

What does "self-rule" mean? Will it lead to withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani troops from the State? Will Indian and Pakisani secret agencies stop interfering in all internal matters? Will it eradicate unemployment, poverty, disease, oppression and injustice from the State? Will it provide, justice to the oppressed when the judicial system is almost caught in a life and death struggle in the State? Will self-rule bring any drastic change in Kashmir's economic condition?. When nothing of the sort is anywhere in sight, does it not mean that those crying for self-rule or greater autonomy are only seeking more powers and more authority for themselves? I have reputedly stressed that the beginning of solving Kashmir issues has to be made by loving Kashmir, its waterfalls, snow-clad mountains, grasslands, lakes, rivers and streams and above all the love of the land from Gilgit to Lakhanpor.

General Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met in Havana. They declared formation of a joint Indo-Pak mechanism to fight terrorism. One faction of Hurriyat and a few local parities welcomed it. What does it prove? Did Havana Joint Declaration make any commitment of solution of Kashmir's problems? People of Kashmir and their leadership should have no doubt that not to speak of the US, even India or Pakistan will not be able to solve their problems or present them their rights on a platter unless the people of the State have a unanimous programme for the solution of their problems. Those who have great expectations from Pakistan should also think about the prosperity, development and the future of the masses of Pakistani people. If the people of Pakistan care for the security and safety of their country more than for Al-Qaeda or

Taliban or their ideological commitment, then the Kashmiris should not became a source of threat to their security. We should not test the patience of the two countries. Instead of making people hostages to dreams, Utopia and hollow slogans and doling out disastrous suggestions to the people in authority in New Delhi (to keep themselves saddled in seats of power), I would in all politeness, advise them to make the best use of a rare opportunity that history has thrown up now for a peaceful solution of Kashmir issue. New Delhi should eschew dilly-dallying tactics like constituting committees, calling meetings and holding seminars --- all an exercise in futility --- and like Pakistan adopt a flexible attitude. Instead of trying to gain time, it should move towards a lasting solution of the problem.

The US and European countries have never been sincere friends of anybody in the past nor shall they be in future. Of course they have been staunch fighters for their self interests. The people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir can sit down round a table and solve their problems. In doing so, they can lay the foundation for a new dream, the dream of forming United States of South Asia. This would usher in an economic revolution as happened after the formation of European Union. That will radically change the condition of the people of the region, and the geographical barriers which separate them will no more remain an obstruction as is the case in Europe. Both India and Pakistan should concede the identity of Kashmiris, remove the dividing line drawn in blood on their land and make the United Kashmir a unit of the United Sates of South Asia.

Much was talked about cease fire in the holy month of Ramadhan. But valuable blood continued to be shed on both sides of the line. Even on the first day of the holy month, one police woman was killed when a bomb was hurled on a police party. One more was wounded. Additionally, unidentified gun men shot dead six persons at different places. Does the holy month permit this? Indian Prime Minister should have strengthened public opinion against terrorism by announcing unilateral cease fire. The people are fed up with fighting, and whosoever takes the initiative of announcing cease fire, will win much public favour. This would provide space for normalising bilateral relations. We Kashmiris would expect them to treat us as human beings. The Prime Minister should fulfil his promises, and order the forces to desist from indiscriminate firing,

vandalising, arrests and custodial killings in habitats, villages, town and cities.

I must help Indians remember that executing people is against the principles of Gandhiji. This evil law has been discarded in most of the civilized countries. It brings defamation. Executing Afzal Guroo will exacerbate hatred. India has appealed to Pakistani President not to execute Sarabjt Singh. In fact entire Indian media and India public are trying to save Sarabjit Singh from execution. Nobody should be brought to the gallows. Man cannot become God.

O2-Oct-2006

Voiceless people, unbridled administration and crippled justice!

Democracy has three organs, legislative, administration and judiciary.Administration is called the servant of the people; legislature frames laws and judiciary interprets them. Judiciary is expected to do justice to the people. General opinion considers democracy a better system of governance...

J&K State is governed by the Constitution of India. The State organs function under the laws framed by the Indian parliament and the State legislative assembly. Judges interpret the laws while delivering judgements and the lawyers fight law suits in the light of what the constitution stipulates.

For last sixteen years the State is faced with militancy. As such some laws have been made that give wide ranging powers to the administration, especially the police. This subverts the authority of the judiciary so much so that even the judgments of the High Court are taken no more than a joke. To be precise, the orders issued by the High Court and even the Supreme Court of releasing detainees have not been honored by the administration. The courts quashed many detentions made under PSA but the administration trivialized it by re-arresting the person within the premises of the court. Again under PSA, he is sent back to the prison to serve another two year term. Farooq alias Bitta Karate spent 17 years in the jail. The Supreme Court also ordered his release. But he was re-arrested as soon as he stepped out of the gate of the prison.

Justice is not done in Kashmir. A man seeking justice has to go through a stupendous complex process, which takes years and years. After filling the pockets of the lawyers who undertake to defend the justice seekers, justice remains elusive. Somebody has very rightly said that justice

delayed is justice denied.

It appears that the administration is hatching a conspiracy to undo people's trust in judiciary by not acting upon the verdict of the court. A new chief justice has taken over in the State. He has evinced keen interest in providing quick justice to the people; he has taken note of pollution of Dal Lake and also the environmental degradation like felling of trees and crops etc. All this kindled hope among the people of the State. But alas this was only a daydream because the activity of constructing structures around the lake continues unabated under the shadow of LAWDA. The Dal stinks. While motoring along boulevard, one must pull down the window panes of the car to avoid foul and nauseating smell. If Dal is to be saved, then the white elephant called LAWDA must be scrapped immediately. Ever since LAWDA came into force, some of its corrupt employees, from an ordinary clerk up to its Vice Chairman, have raised properties totally disproportionate to their normal income. This reflects the widespread corruption, misappropriation and bribery rampant in the organization. It is reported that the Vigilance has before it many cases of corruption against senior officers but nobody touches these files.

I filed a petition under PIL (573/2005) against illegal allotment of land by the Custodian. Despite four hearings in the court, no decision has been announced so far. People have been waiting for ten to twelve years for a decision of the court in their cases, but nothing moves. The lawyers have nothing at stake and the petitioner gets fleeced as cases are procrastinated. I know a lawyer who lives in Nishat locality. He does not only offer regular prayers but also acts as Imam of a mosque. He sold a plot of land belonging to a widow with her consent on 18 March 2003. Three witnesses put their signatures on the sale deed which was got registered by the court. The lawyer too put his formal seal on the documents. But a son of the widow sold his share of land to somebody else for a huge amount. Playing fraud, he made an application on behalf of his widowed mother and through the same lawyer that the land was still undivided. She pleaded that her son could not sell the land. Despite the fact that all documents were before the court, the lawyer in question tried to mislead the court. A letter was sent to the Bar Association along with a copy of all relevant documents disclosing the role of the said lawyer. But instead of taking cognizance of a fraudulent case, the Bar Association

tried to shield the lawyer. Three months have passed and the Bar is yet to consider the complaint. There are thousands of cases like this.

We do not deny the fact that there are many honest and sincere employees in the administrative structure. There are honest persons in the police department too and I know many in official circles and everybody says that if we had such honest administrative staff in the State nobody would even think of having any grudge or hatred against bureaucracy. Some dishonest and corrupt officers in charge of police stations have adopted the calumny of implicating innocent persons in different criminal cases in order to extract bribes from them. I sent a two-page letter of complaint against the SI and ASI of Nishat to the DGP, SSP and IG. None of them cared to send me a reply or an acknowledgement.

These officers, against whom I had lodged a complaint, registered two cases against me. One pertained to the alleged felling of trees at 2 o'clock in the night when there was no witness around. The second was an FIR filed against me and eleven other persons by one to whom Custodian land was allotted illegally and we had challenged that. The police harassed the eleven accused persons in a manner as if they had committed a murder. Even their womenfolk were harassed and intimidated.

Extremely indecent treatment is meted out to those militants who have given up arms, taken to peaceful life and are doing honest work to feed their families. They are sometimes harassed and accused of being informers; they are denied passports and they are denied government jobs although they are qualified and capable. They are required to report to the police stations or army camps or bunkers too often. As a result of this policy of the government thousands of young people are dragged to the brink of penury and frustration. When driven to the wall, it should not be a surprise if they take up arms once again. Renewal of passport is a time consuming and frustrating process. These are not renewed even after a lapse of three years from the date of applying for renewal.

What does India mean to do with Kashmiris by adopting this type of policy? We have said something about the administrative and judicial organs, and let us say something about the legislative organ. The

Legislative Assembly has constituted a House Committee which is asked to probe into the irregularities in the Department of Revenue during the government of Mufti Sahib. Bhim Singh is its chairman and Bilal Lodhi and one Mr. Sharma are its other members. Four months ago, this Committee issued a list of 90 illegal appointments made in the department. The Chief Minister has not so far taken any action on this irregularity. Cases of illegal allotment of land by the Custodian are also before this Committee. But expediency and pressure from the ruling cliques have forced it not to take any step against their cohorts and MLA/MLC fraternity. Our impression is that this committee is dragging on the cases till the assembly completes its tenure. Hence neither a decision on any case will emerge nor will any of their comrades get exposed or harmed.

Unfortunately, our society has developed the psyche of let happen what happens. I have seen young man manhandling elderly persons on the roadside; I have seen an adult being aggressive with a child and I have seen a man doing excesses to a woman. As far as I am concerned, I try to stop such unbecoming acts but it springs me a surprise when I see people just looking at such ugly scenes and turning their heads unimpressed, and not responding to the voice of their conscience. This kind of attitude is responsible for turning Dal Lake into a vast toilet. Like dead bodies, people remain silent and unmoved on seeing their water resources depleted and dried up to the great detriment of their future generations. Have they shut up their mouths, eyes and ears? Those running administration have become masters of people although they are supposed to be the servants of people. Judiciary is slow to the extent as if it does not exist. One can imagine what shall be the destiny of the people and their future generations in such a situation? I shudder when I think of it. Then I ask myself whether I did injustice to my children by pulling them out of humane system of a European country and brought them to this place

I would like to repeat here two sentences from a letter written by one Khurshid Lone in the Chattan of 19 October 2006 under the caption Musharraf ke pas chareh hi kya tha. In one sentence he asks "What is hidden behind the return of Hashim Qureshi, I do not want to probe into it", and the second sentence was "What was the way out for Musharraf?"

I would like to tell him that what prompted me to return to Kashmir is my patriotism. I had money, I had European citizenship; and passport, and I had a 5 bedroom house in the expensive city of Amsterdam. Despite all these facilities, I felt an urge inside me to return to my native land and share the pain and suffering of my compatriots. I have no purpose in returning to Kashmir other than the love of my native land and its people. Regarding the second question, I had analysed the steps taken by Musharraf and the sentiments of the people there. I had said that only future historians will say whether Musharraf's steps were right or wrong. I had also mentioned the story of small countries struggling against the US. It is for the people to decide. But I must assert that like my departed leader and martyr Maqbool Bhat I want to be an honest writer. I understand the sanctity of the pen. I always try to understand and analyse events in their true form. I also want to give tongue to the truth, which people express only in low tones and in their homes, or closed rooms, and in private gatherings. I do it so that I am able to express their thinking and their sentiments in open. I hope this will give them also the tongue that would speak openly.

16-oct-2006

You Deaf and Blind :
Listen to People's Voice!

In the Chattan of July 13, I had brought to light six cases of land allotment in which former Revenue Minister, Custodian General and the current Transport Minster are involved. The Chief Minister took quick action and cancelled the allotments. It is appreciable but not enough. Those treating the Custodian department as their private property should be brought to book. Illegal occupation of Nuzul, Custodian and Ghas Charai lands should be removed forthwith. Reclaimed land should be converted into a colony for the poor and homeless, allotting five Marla plot to each homestead. Poor people with large families huddled up in a single room accommodation, too, should benefit from this scheme. Allotment to the poor should be made on easy installments.

A sum of five hundred crores and fifty lakh rupees was released from February to the yearend (2006) for beatification of Dal Lake. Has this amount been spent just on felling ten thousand trees? The people have a right to know what happened to public property. A raid on the house of a junior clerk of LAWDA on 30 October brought to light illegal property worth crores of rupees. What about the big fish.

Notwithstanding cancellation of allotment of Custodian land, the official nexus of the same department has made about 90 appointments through back door. The House Committee recommended quashing of these appointments. The State government and the office of the Chief Minster in particular should order annulment of these appointments. Deserving candidates should fill the vacated posts. In fact, I want to write on some themes other than the Custodian issue. But since I received a host of messages and sms, I thought it unethical not to make a brief reference to it. Actually I want to write on two items, transport and electricity. The voice

of voiceless people should be heard and the authorities should not become Gandhiji's three monkeys.

Electricity

Against the wishes of people, and even their demonstrations, electric department has begun installing meters for some time. Installation is forced and some MLAs are playing vote bank politics by instigating people. Once these very MLAs come to power, they will be the first to see to it that meters are installed. However, I have to point out one thing. Damage caused to public property in the course of demonstrations is in reality damage to the property of the people. If grid stations and transformers are vandalized because we have no electric supply, it is our loss. It is our money that has been invested in raising these structures.

When meters are installed, we should consume electricity according to our need; we should pay the fee as any civilized people in the world do. The problem is that during wintry months the government does not provide sufficient firewood to the hammams. Mosque administrators naturally consume electricity very frugally. It is not paid for. A person coming to offer prayers in the house of God does so by misusing electricity. He is supposed to pay for the facility. This is not allowed. The State is so bankrupt financially that it has to ask for funds from New Delhi to meet the salary bill of the establishment. We have become a nation that imports everything eatable. If the road is blocked, onion and tomatoes are scarcely available.

Installing electric meters will not stop theft of electricity. Kashmir with abundant water resources has the capacity of generating 16 thousand megawatts of electricity. State's need including industries do not exceed 6 thousand megawatts. The surplus could be sold to India and Pakistan, and thus income could be generated. In the process people could be provided with electricity on reduced cost. We have cold weather for more than five months in a year and people need to warm their homes and cook their food. Therefore without looking for an alternative, mere installation of meters will not increase the income of the department. We have open wiring and the electric staff also plays the sadistic role of telling people how they can steal electricity. We have seen people

stopping the meters and hooking up direct to main supply lines. If there is underground wiring as in foreign countries, theft of electric power will stop automatically. Underground wiring will also overcome the problem of recurrent faults in supply caused by snowstorms, heavy rains and inclement weather. Power will be assured round the clock just because there will be no theft.

Let me cite my own example. I pay for three and a half kilowatts of electricity per month. The agreement provides that electric current will remain in place all the 24 hours. But in practice, I don't get it for more than six hours. Last winter we did not have electricity for nearly two months. But I had to pay the full fee. If I had meter installed in my house, I would have paid only as much as was due according to meter reading.

It is said that the government wanted to oblige some closely connected and influential person and thus the campaign of installing meters without providing an alternative was undertaken. The scheme is limited to the city of Srinagar only. We have the poor and the destitute in the city who cannot afford buying a gas cylinder. They have their grown up daughters waiting for marriage. The youth are unemployed. This is the state of our economy today.

Therefore before beginning the installation of meters, the government should take up the project of underground wiring. People need to be educated through media of how we can increase our income. They have to be told that the quantity of power consumed by one heater could light ninety energy saver bulbs, which means bringing light to the entire house. The student community will immensely benefit from regular power supply. If hospitals, colleges, schools and universities have uninterrupted power supply, it will spread the light of knowledge everywhere. Of course, the government shall have to supply firewood, kerosene oil and gas in the beginning on reduced rates so that it has time to proceed with underground wiring.

Electric department officials have to be restrained. Their living standard has to be commensurate with their income. Some of the officials at lower rungs are reported to induce people to steal electricity for a paltry bribe of 50 or 100 rupees. In summer we may get electricity for just 8 hours but in

winter it is not at all visible because the government moves to Jammu. This dismal condition has to be reversed.

Transport

Transport is an essential service. We all depend on it. Unfortunately, our transport system creates more inconveniences for the commuters than conveniences. A universal practice is that public transport vehicles are required to go through annual check. On checked and passed vehicles, a seal is fixed on the number plate for the full year for which a fee is also charged. In our state, public transport vehicles run without breaks, worn out tyres and often without headlight or indicators. Public transport vehicle generally skip bus stops and seldom ply on time. Wherever a commuter raises his hand, the bus stops to pick him up; wherever a passenger wants to get down he makes the driver stop the bus. The driver, conductor and the passengers all smoke freely in the bus making journey miserable for other passengers. Buses are overcrowded and school and college students ride on the bus tops or just dangerously suspend their bodies from its sides. My thirteen year old son, who can drive perfectly, tells me that he can get a driving license by producing four photographs plus a sum of 3500 rupees even though he is only 13. A bitter truth it is. Under aged boys drive public transport vehicles for they can get a license for just four thousand rupees.

Twenty-five years ago, the Auditor and Comptroller General of India nullified registration of all vehicles that were more than 25 years old. These had to be grounded according to the existing law. Our traffic officials are not interested in enforcing traffic laws. All that they care for is to grease their palms to the tune of 50 to 100 rupees a day. And the chain of bribery is long enough to reach the highest echelons of the department. On the side of passengers, it is regrettable that our insensitivity has cast us in such depths so as not to care to vacate a seat for an old man or a woman who is standing. Officially some seats in a passenger bus are reserved exclusively for ladies but these are seldom vacated by the youth. Eager to pick up wayside passengers, drivers of public transport do not hesitate to drive rashly and thus endanger the precious lives. Surprisingly nobody from among the passengers opens his mouth in protest. Nobody knows whether the transport department seniors have

any plan on the table to improve this sordid state of affairs. They are the white elephant for public exchequer.

We propose following revolutionary measures to improve the condition of public transport in our Sate:

All public and private transport vehicles should be sent for maintenance check within three months. After these are passed, a seal should be affixed on the number plate indicating that the vehicle is roadworthy. This checking should become annual feature. This step will earn some revenue for the government but more than that, it will save innocent pedestrians from accidental death or injury. A passenger bus must in all cases stop at specified bus stops to let passengers alight or board the bus. An instant fine of five hundred rupees should be imposed on a defaulter. Passengers have the responsibility of boarding or leaving a bus only on specified stops. Senior citizens should be charged only half of bus fare. This facility should be extended to students, media persons and children below 12 years of age.

Public transport vehicles should be run on CNG as in Delhi and Bombay. This will save environment from pollution.

No driver of public transport vehicle should be less than 25 years of age. If there is one, his vehicle should be confiscated. Transport and traffic police should jointly establish an Awareness Bureau so that traffic awareness is brought to the public through media. As more than 70 per cent licenses are forged, therefore law should be made making it compulsory for all license holders to reappear for driving test. This might necessitate putting the validity of present license in abeyance till the test is passed. Prior to this some guidelines had been set forth in connection with a PIL lodged in this behalf. Judicial directives are given scant attention in some quarters and I had brought it to the public notice in one of my earlier articles.

In one of my previous articles I had made a mention of one Farooq Ahmad Dar alias Bitta Karate. Despite directive from the Supreme Court, he was not set free from prison. But when questions were raised on judicial system and the administration, this person was released from the

prison on 27 October. If the administration listens to this type of issues raised in the press and elsewhere, we shall not have to pick up unsavory headline for our write ups.

Ever since I began writing on various social and economic issues, I have been receiving innumerable messages and sms" from ordinary people. I appeal to my readers to write to me on issues on which they have reliable information. These may pertain to any department related to the welfare and convenience of the public. I would extend this appeal to honest government officials too. With support from serious and honest members of civil society, I shall be able to expose the corrupt practices of anti-people elements, anti-people bureaucrats and ministers. I believe that a people's movement needs to be launched to set right this social aberration. But it is necessary that complaints brought to my notice are based on facts and can be substantiated without much ado. I know many responsible persons in the administration,in police and other departments. I know many officials who are very honest. That is why I go to the print media with complaints only when I have myself ascertained their veracity. I am a busy man and hardly get time once in a fortnight to write on these issues. But I believe that a nation that has fought for its rights or for freedom will not really attain success unless it observes the rules and principles. I pledge to raise voice against all sorts of oppression and intimidation unleashed against the people of J&K State. I want the people to develop the quality of fearlessness while fighting suppression and tyranny. I must raise my voice against intransigence rampant in our society so that the future of our new generations is protected.

O6-Nov-2006

Post-mortem of Self-Rule?

For last sixty years, people of Jammu and Kashmir remain divided on various counts. They are harangued with slogans and rhetoric such as plebiscite, self determination, and accession to Pakistan, autonomy and religion --- all in the name of Kashmir issue. More recent allurement is self-rule. Where does this lead us to? Three generations on both sides of the line have been kept away from economic and educational race, modernization, industrial and agricultural development, road network and power supply. Sometimes back General Musharraf let out the cat called self-rule from the bag. In a live telecast he candidly said he had not clear contours about self-rule in his mind.

A few days ago Pakistan's foreign minister Tahir Iqbal, addressed the Pakistan sponsored Kashmir American Council in Washington headed by Dr. Fai. He explained self rule as this: "Both parts of the State of Jammu and Kashmir should be united into a new State, which would take all decisions by itself except on defense, foreign affairs and currency, on which India and Pakistan would exercise joint control."

No sooner did General Musharraf float the idea of self-rule than PDP, which was heading the coalition government for three years and still is a part of it, began trumpeting the slogan. They wanted to convey to the people of J&K that they supported General Musharraf's idea of self-rule. I tried to obtain the draft copy of self-rule formula from the PDP central office and also the private secretary of PDP chairman. No plan by the name of self-rule existed in their records. Actually, the reply from that side was that the drafting committee had not as yet drafted the self-rule formula. From the way in which much hue and cry is raised by PDP circles about self-rule, an impression is sought to be created among the

people of the State that self-rule mechanism is having precisely the same outlines as in the formula given by Pakistan. Imagine its double standards. On the one hand, while remaining in power, it poses to be the representative of India --- and continue to oppress the people of the State ---, and on the other hand it wants to project itself as the spokesman of General Musharraf by raising the bogey of self rule. In the process, he shrewdly contrives elbowing out the Hurriyat Chief Mirwaiz Moulavi Omar Farooq.
Before the Muft's departure for the US, a formal meeting of PDP was called. The speakers made bold statements that the Mufti would disclose his self-rule formula before the United Nations. An impression was created that on his return, the Mufti would carry home self rule in his suit case. In the open and free atmosphere of the western countries, both of the Pandora's boxes were opened in Washington, one by the Pakistani foreign minister in Kashmir American Council and the other by the Mufti at a private dinner. But the Mufti was quick to add that his proposal is self-rule within the fame of Indian constitution. He had gone to present Indian External Affairs Ministry's drafted speech before the UN in his capacity as Indian private delegation. In his speech he called India a responsible nuclear power and emphasised on India's atomic needs for her energy sector.

I have consulted many dictionaries to understand what the term self rule means. It says "The state in which a county or region is governed by its own people, not by people from outside". Applying this interpretation to J&K State, it would simply mean independent Jammu and Kashmir. Now what we can deduce from the Mufti's interpretation of self rule is that the people of the State will be allowed to govern themselves under the rubric of autonomy but within the frame of Indian Constitution. A study of accession documents will show that under Article 370, this provision is already there. However, under self rule, people will be allowed to travel across the line and also conduct bilateral trade. This too has been made possible as a result bilateral agreements between the two countries.

In the light of this, whatever explanation of self - rule is brought forward by National Conference or any legal or political luminary or any organization, it is nothing but an exercise in futility. It is only on the explanation given by Pakistan that many questions arise. Will not this self rule formula end up

in a fiasco in case an understanding between India, Pakistan and Kashmiris does not materialize?

The first question on Pakistan's formula is this: with whom shall the ultimate control over the currency rest? In other words it means in whose control shall the total economy of the State rest? Secondly, defence will also be under the joint control of India and Pakistan. And external affairs too. The ground reality at the moment is that Jammu and Kashmir is virtually distributed into four parts meaning Gilgit under Pakistan Directorate; Pakistan controlled Kashmir called Azad Kashmir, Aksaichin and a sparsely inhabited vast area under the control of China, and finally Indian controlled part, which includes regions from Jammu province Kashmir valley and Ladakh. Although Ladakh was under the administrative sphere of Kashmir but by granting it the status of Autonomous Hill Council, India has virtually separated it from Kashmir Valley jurisdiction.

Apart from this physical distribution, psychologically also the State is distributed into six regions. Each region has its own thinking: Gilgit and Baltistan, Pakistan controlled Azad Kashmir, Aksaichin, Ladakh and Kargil and Kashmir Valley. Jammu people and the Muslims of Jammu region also think differently.

If India and Pakistan are able to unite Jammu and Kashmir on self rule plank, it will be a very big achievement. Leaving Aksaichin aside for the time being, if people on both sides of the line of control in J&K can come and go for trade or visits just as people travel between Kashmir and Pathankot, or between Muzaffarabad and Karachi, this may receive support from the masses of people. At the moment this it is not possible for them to do so.

In regard to the Pakistani formula, there are some serious questions. Will India and Pakistan agree to raise a force of a few divisions or units and deploy it in "United Kashmir" facilitating withdrawal of their troops from respective areas? This joint force has to be placed under one Defense Committee required to take care of defense of all the territories of the United Kashmir. Or is it that Pakistani troops continue to be where they are in its part of Kashmir and so do the Indian troops? Obviously a joint

defense committee has to be constituted to maintain control on both. In either case the question arises: Suppose it does happen, against whom shall they be defending Kashmir? Actual dispute is between India and Pakistan. If a defense committee is constituted with both the countries maintaining their troops as are and where are, then the question is will it be successful?

Will the protagonists of self-rule obtain membership for Kashmiris in international organizations like the UNO, UN Human Rights Commission etc. before the two countries take joint control of its foreign affairs? If they can, it would be a welcome step for converting J&K Sate into an independent state sometimes later. The fact is that there is a world of difference in the foreign policies of India and Pakistan. Will the two countries be able to place before the world community the views of the people of the State? And if under a prospect of self-rule the State is not to be provided membership of international organizations, then what is the fun of having a joint foreign policy?

As regards currency, it is not just printing the picture of Quid Azam or Gandhi ji on a piece of paper. Currency is closely linked to economy. If the economy is not strong, printing currency notes results in inflation. Does joint currency arrangement mean that Indian currency will be transacted in Gilgilt, Baltistan and Azad Kashmir and Pakistani currency in the Indian part of the State? In terms of economy, the State is entirely dependent on India or Pakistan. We have not the money to pay the salary bill of our establishment. If both the countries were sincere about the people of the state, we would not have been that poor. If the two governments stop providing grants to their respective parts of the State, our local governments would not be able to meet even one fourth of our salary bills. With self-rule in our pockets, we shall still be going with beggar's bowl to the doors of India and Pakistan In case the self rule governing committee or the body (whatever), which will be dispensing the three items, decides to stop asking for financial assistance from the two countries, then in that case this self-rule will not last more than an hour. World system tells us that a country unable to stand on its legs economically may not totally lose its independence but surely has to mortgage it to capitalist countries of the world.

This will be the shape of the State if we accept self-rule in the form it is doled out. If the two countries are earnest and sincere in solving Kashmir issue, the best way would be to allow people on both sides to come and go freely and remove all obstructions in their way. Loc should be opened; a joint conference of political parties and personalities should be called; economic experts should be duly consulted and a formula for solution should be hammered out.

In the Hague Peace Conference in 1999, we had proposed the "Freezing to Defreeze" as a formula for solution of the issue. It took care of most of the suggestions in self-rule mechanism. It also took into consideration the ego of India, Pakistan, constraints of the people of Jammu and Kashmir; international situation and the perception of the people in all the five regions of the State. Let all those suggestions and proposals offered in regard to the solution of Kashmir issue, be placed before people through newspapers, conferences and seminars for their free and thorough discussion. Otherwise, we shall have to see another half a century or more of more confusion in Kashmir. Confusion created by politicians today will take their own future generation into its grip. Those who are nursing the wishful self-rule formula should keep their eye on the nature of relationship between the two countries. If a solution is desired to be obtained from meetings, then these meetings might procrastinate for another one century and by that time the two will have fulfilled their resolve of finishing the last Kashmiri.

20-Nov-2006

Impending clash between the West and the Muslims

The US stepped in to fill the vacuum created by the decline of the British imperialism in the continents of Asia, Africa and regions like South Asia. She labeled her entry variously; fight against communism, export of democracy and protection of human rights etc. What she actually did in these regions and countries was to manage local dissent, hatred and revolt through CIA against popular governments, and provide crutches to military generals, Sheikhs and monarchs to fill in the place. Former Pakistani Army Chief Mirza Aslam Beg is on record having said," No change takes place in Pakistan without the blessings and wishes of the US". America's behind the curtain hand moved in many events shaping in the region and Pakistan such as the ouster of Musaddeq in Iran, removal of Zulfiqar Bhutto, and the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharief governments.

However, the US had to meet with disaster: first in the case of war in Vietnam where it had to land helicopters on house tops to pullout its humiliated troops. Second, the great Iranian religious leader, Ayatollah Khumeini leading a powerful people's movement, threw them and their protégé, the Shah, out of Iran. Iran went through a revolution. The US had armed the regime of Saddam Hussein with lethal weapons. Having procured enormous wealth from the Gulf Sheikhs and kings for Saddam, the US contrived to push Iran and Iraq into a ten - year - long bilateral war in which about a million Muslims perished.

In Afghanistan, two pro-Soviet bloc parties, namely Parcham and Watan forced a coup on the government of President Da'ud through Nur Muhammad Taraki. When the mullahs and tribal chiefs of Afghanistan felt the brunt of Taraki's oppression, they planned resistance movement. Seizing the time by forelock, the US quickly made Pakistan a frontline country to resist the Soviet incursion. The resistance movement was built up by providing enormous arms and ammunition to it via General Zia's

military regime in Pakistan. It has to be reminded that the groups of mujahedeen fighting against the Russians in Afghanistan often indulged in mutual in-fight. Amusingly, all of them call themselves supporters of Islam. There was great fighting and bloodshed among the groups lead by Commanders Ahmad Shah Masud, Hekmatyar, Maulana Haq and Burhanu'd-Din. Details are available in the book The Bear Trap authored by the former Deputy Chief of ISI, Brigadier Yusuf.

Soviet Union was beset with economic recession and Gorbachev's reforms upset the old order. Hence the Soviet Union signed Geneva Agreement, and withdrew her troops from Afghanistan. As there was no unity among warring Afghans, President Najibullah continued his rule for another five years. Even after the execution of Najib, the warring groups, who earlier fought the Russians, now indulged in a fratricide. Ultimately, Pakistan's ISI organized the Afghan youth receiving education in Pakistan's religious seminaries into a powerful organization and thus the Taliban came into being.

The US has its eye on the natural resources especially oil of the Middle East and the world. Hence we find her controlling energy spots. In 1971, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia had boycotted supply of oil, which could have brought the American and European economy to the brink of disaster. Countering this threat, the US preserved her under water oil resources so that even if embargo was put on oil, the US would have enough resources to last her for two hundred years. Iraq's economy was shattered as a result of war with Iran. The Kurds had raised a revolt against her. Therefore Saddam impressed upon the Saudis and other Gulf States to make Kuwait pay her five billion dollars. They would not oblige and, therefore, the US drew the plan of directly controlling oil reserves in the region. Saddam told the American Ambassador in Iraq of his intentions to recapture Kuwait. She indirectly incited him by saying that it was their internal affair and the US would not interfere.

It should not be forgotten that Kuwait was part of Iraq; its Sheikhs were separated from Iraq by the British imperialists. Before Iraq-Kuwait war broke out, American papers reported Pentagon conducting exercise of tank battles in the deserts of California. When the Gulf war began, the US asked other countries, --- especially the Muslim countries ---- to send their

troops to fight the Iraqi aggression in Kuwait. After Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, the US imposed economic and military sanctions on Iraq in the name of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Private houses in Iraq were searched, and at the end of the day, finding a pretext of Iraq possessing nuclear weapons, the US launched an attack on her through CIA. Since Saddam's regime did not enjoy full public support, this war ended up in Iraq's quick defeat. The US, UK and other Western powers became masters of Iraq, and her rich natural resources. In the name of reconstruction of war - ravished Iraq, contracts worth billions of dollars were given to the American and British companies. America embarked on wanton loot of Iraqi oil. No wonder if Iraqi oil became a temporary irritant in relations between the US and France.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban installed their government in Kabul and opted for religious extremist policy. In the name of promulgating Islamic ideology, they brutally massacred their political and ideological opponents, not sparing even women. Osama bin laden despised America's faithlessness. Russia withdrew troops from Kabul, and the US left Afghanistan in lurch. This made Osama bin Ladin think that only the US was responsible for disunity, poverty and ignorance of the Muslims. She was also responsible for what the people in Asia, Africa and South America were facing. He said that the US and the Western countries looted the resources of the entire world to fill their coffers. It was the same Osama and his Al-Qaeda who had become the allies of the US in Islam's war against Russia. General Musharraf has given these details in his book In the Line of Fire. It was during the power of Taliban that Osma shifted his headquarters and his family from Sudan to Afghanistan where he began his religious war against the US and the West. During this period Pakistan's ISI extended full support to Taliban and Al-Qaeda. In connection with 9/11, the US warned Pakistan along with some more countries. Bush said that if Pakistan was not on their side, then she was her enemy and that the US would take her back to Stone Age.

With support from NATO countries, the US launched the biggest ever bombardment of Afghanistan. Power was wrested from Taliban, and along with Al-Qaeda forced to flee Afghanistan. They sought refuge in the tribal area of Pakistan where they had established their link and had cemented relations with powerful political and religious segments.

Thus Pakistan was obliged to provide the facility of military bases not only to the American troops but also to NATO troops. Pakistani army had to fight side by side with these foreign forces against Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Pakistan's tribal areas. In Chapter 23 of his book, General Musharraf writes with pride under the heading 'The Haunt' that his forces captured 689 Al-Qaeda and Taliban personnel and handed over 369 of them to the US and that they earned bounties (rewards) totalling millions of dollars. He further writes "Those who habitually accuse us of "not doing enough" in the war on terror should simply ask the CIA how much prize money it has paid to the Government of Pakistan."

Taliban and Al Qaeda are gradually gaining sympathy of people not only in Pakistan and Afghanistan but also of a large majority of Muslim youth all over the world. The reasons are (a) what are stated in the preceding paragraph (b) inability of American sponsored Karzai regime in Kabul to deliver goods (c) attacks by NATO, American and Pakistani troops on al-Qaeda and Taliban, and (f) killing of innocent people in the course of bombardment.

Arms and ammunition mean little for the American and NATO troops. But it is a setback to them to see 5 – 10 of their soldiers getting killed every day in the fighting that ranges from Iraq to Afghanistan. Because of this senseless loss of man power there is growing pressure of the masses of people in the US and in European countries on their governments to withdraw troops from both countries. Republican Party of Bush met with a debacle against Democrats in the Senate and the Congress, the reason being the loss of American soldiers in the war. This is replication of America's war in Vietnam. More than 150,000 people have been killed so far in Iraq war. Of these American soldiers compute to 20 thousand. A civil war is raging in Iraq where car bombs, blasts, shootouts and suicide attacks have become part of daily life. The toll is estimated at 200 casualties per day.

Will this not exacerbate anti-American feelings in the mind of Muslim youth? In the 9/7 underground bomb blasts in the UK, involvement of Muslim youth was reported. Recently 1700 British Muslim youth were reported to have joined Al-Qaeda to fight against UK. And the Saudi monarchs are spending billions of dollars to keep this war away from their

kingdom. There is a plan to raise a wall on Saudi border with Iraq. The US and Western countries are framing new anti- Muslim laws every day. Muslims are meted our humiliating treatment at the airports and in appointments. This is rapidly increasing the man power of organizations such as Al-Qaeda, Lashkar-e Taiyyaba, and Jaysh-e Muhammad.

Iran is a power situated between Iraq and Afghanistan. Muslims of Syria and Lebanon are its allies. Iran is playing an active role in not allowing the US make its foothold there. Iran knows it well that the US is not her friend nor of anybody else. Therefore, Israel's continuing aggressiveness, physical presence of America in Iraq and Afghanistan, massacre of innocent Muslims, unbecoming and humiliating treatment of Muslims all over the world serve fuel to anti-American and anti-West sentiments in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Pakistan military regime is supporting the US. However, masses of Pakistani people and all groups of opposition express silent sympathy with the Taliban and al-Qaeda in their war against the US. The ongoing situation in the region gives us a clear signal that if a political solution to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is not found, the entire region may be engulfed in the leaping flames of annihilation. America has never made permanent friends, she cares for permanent interest. Her friendly or inimical stance serves only that purpose.

War against Al-Qaeda is different in pattern from what it was in Vietnam. Al Qaeda has legitimized attacks of its activists on non-military establishments of the Americans and her allies all over the world. They have carried this war to the homes of the Americans thus endangering the lives of tourists to and from the US and the Western countries. American citizens feel insecure everywhere and this has left unhealthy influence on relations between the American Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. If the war continues as at present, a possibility may arise of Muslims migrants expelled from their western or American homes. Even now many of them are returning to the countries of their origin owing to the humiliating treatment meted out to them in their present places in the West. If humanism and civilization are to be saved in the world then the US and the Western countries should resolve their problems with the people in the Middle East, Africa and South America failing which this war will spell disaster for the entire world. 04-Dec-2006

I wish I had authority?

If I had authority what would I do for my people who are oppressed and steeped in economic debility and ignorance? What would I do to pull them out of large looming uncertain future?

The first thing I would do would be to house arrest in a guest house the leads of separatist parties who call Kashmir a contentious issue. They would be set free only when they produce with a unanimous formula for its solution. Many leaders including General Pervez Musharraf and militant leadership and others tried to forge unity among these separatists but without any success. Those who took up the gun did not complement it with its other requisites. They did not make any planning before pulling the trigger. No institution was incepted for providing succor to the orphans, widows, arrested youth and others suffering economically on account of armed struggle. They had no scheme for the rehabilitation of affected families. Thousands of young people who had taken to arms would not have abandoned them if they had assurance that their children, relatives, parents and dependents would be provided with succor in case he became a casualty. Look at Lebanon. The houses destroyed in war with Israel were rebuilt by the people. Look at freedom struggles in Algeria, Vietnam and other places. These succeeded because along with war, plans with reconstruction of damage done were floated simultaneously

Now that by and large all separatist organizations have bid farewell to arms and many militant commanders have now donned the mantle of political leadership, they do not still have any plan to run a political movement. All that they do is to wait for some accident and when that happens, they rush to lead a public demonstration, raise slogans and give call for strikes. Some children were drowned in Wular. These leaders raised slogans for two days and then calmed down. Death sentence was pronounced against Afzal Guru. Demonstrations were made precisely as we find in films, slogans were raised and even some announced to offer

death prayers. Death sentence was put in abeyance and then silence prevailed all over. These people are loath to talk about local problems such as Dal Lake pollution, electric power shortage, land grabbing etc. Our water resources are depleting. This is the reason why I would put these leaders under house arrest to force them come out with a unanimous formula to relieve the masses of this dismal and sordid situation.

Let us talk about mainstream parities. It would have been good if these parties played politics within the frame of the Indian constitution. The problem is that these parties fight elections under the provisions of the Indian Constitution but at the same time when they come to power, they employ all negative tactics to keep themselves in the seats of power. In the process they even show pieces of rock salt or green kerchiefs to the people, which mean their heart lies in Pakistan. Referendum is another ploy. Farooq Abdullah is not only a formal member of National Liberation Front, but also accepted Maqbool Bhat, the martyred chairman of NLF as his leader. He has kept the gun in the custody of Plebiscite Front people, which was presented to him in a rally in Mirpur. (I have an authentic copy of his Mirpur speech). It is a different story that Maqbool Bhat was sent to gallows when Farooq Abdullah was in power. Today he and men of his ilk are asking for autonomy, self rule and what not. These people are not capable of solving the Kashmir issue nor have they been able to solve any problem of the people of the State during last six decades of power. They have made the State a regular supplicant. Should they not be interned in a guest house and asked to go through a process of self assessment?

If I had power, I would bring about such a change in our educational system that an intelligent Kashmiri youth instead of joining the clerical cadres becomes a skilled person, with self confidence. Standing on his legs he would not only change his destiny but also the destiny of his nation. I would change our educational institutions from money generating institutions to real institutions wherefrom would come out the builders of nation.

According to a statement of the Chief Minister, we have about 20 lakh kanals of Custodian, Nuzul and State land, which would cost about 25

thousand crores of rupees. If I had authority, I would get this land released from the grip of land mafia, corrupt bureaucrats, and depraved politicians and their cronies within fifteen days, and then under a housing colony scheme, allot 6 Marla's to each poor and helpless family on easy installments. I would bring not only the people under this scheme, would extend it to the downtown localities of the cities of Srinagar and Jammu where four to five families' line huddled up in one habitat. The office of Custodian General has allotted on lease lands to well-known educational institutions of the State at the rate of one rupees per kanal, but at the same time, it has re-allotted land to the Biscoe School and the Convent School for another one hundred years against a paltry sum. The view of the government in this was to make way for the wards of poor people to receive education in these institutions. But unfortunately, these two institutions have turned into business centers where the wards of poor and ordinary citizens cannot even dream to enter. Was it not desirable to sell a portion of these lands, and invest the money in electricity generating projects so that each school and each household received uninterrupted electric power?

If I had authority, I would open factories and workshops to provide employment to unemployed youth of the State. The State playing grounds are empty. How can our younger generations become mentally alert? If I had authority I would provide each tehsil with a playing ground for its youth. I would utilize the services of electronic media like TV and radio fully for emphasizing our readers to keep our environs clean.

If I had authority, I would reconsider all politically motivated appointments to various vacancies made as a result of nepotism, bribery, covetousness, and threat. I would give these posts on the basis of capability and honesty to the destitute in the town. I would constitute a committee comprising dedicated citizens, patriotic offices, courageous lawyers and honest police functionaries. I would ask them to identify the people responsible for polluting our water resources. I would ask for finding out who was the first to allow the construction of a building or a house on the bank of the river or in the Dal Lake. I would find out the traitors and anti-national elements that have become a source of shrinking 27 square mile Dal Lake with clear and transparent water to shrink to just 7 square miles of area. Who had a role in allowing concrete



Hashim Qureshi addressing mammoth gathering at Kupwara



Hashim Qureshi addressing public rally at Charar - Sharif



From Right Late Mir Qayum,Hashim Qureshi
and the Great Maqboo Butt Shaheed

buildings and vegetable gardens to come up on the most beautiful lake of Asia? I would find out who are the people who allowed civic facilities like electricity, water and telephone to be given illegally to the house owners who have built houses in Dal. If I had power I would see to it that illegal occupation and misuse of our water resources was vacated within two months. I would catch hold of timber thieves who have destroyed our forest wealth and banish them to the forests without any security. If I had power I would not tolerate any orphan shedding tears, and would try to meet their needs. I would remind affluent and prosperous sections of our society the saying of the Holy Prophet that those who patronize the orphan shall, on the day of reckoning, stand by his side as close as two fingers in a hand are.

People have become emotionally repulsive against the State police. But we forget that police is a part of us. It has come from the society that we have cultivated. What is the salary of a policeman? When he is posted at a place far away from his home, he has to go through an ordeal when looking for residential accommodation. He has to run from pillar to post in order to adjust to new situation comfortably. He faces the problem of getting his kids admitted in a school. If his children or any member of his family falls ill, he has to cool his heels at hospitals. This is despite the fact that life insurance premium is deducted from his salary at the base. If the policeman finds it unavoidable to withdraw a portion of money from his general provident fund in order to meet expenditure on medical treatment of any member of his family, he has to pay a bribe to get back his own money. In order to run after these errands, he has to ask for casual leave and even for leave, he has to pay a bribe. He has to perform his duty in any kind of weather, snow and rain and sun and storm. If anything goes wrong with the administration, he is the first target of the wrath of his superiors. If there is gun fight, he is the first target. It is also reported that some police officer even sink to the depths of using foul language against a policeman.

We should not forget that there are also many honest and sympathetic offices and functionaries in the police department. If I could I would make policemen truly sympathetic servants of our people. I would liberate them from want so that they had no scope for taking bribes. Not only would I increase their salaries, I would also see to it that their domestic

requirement like education of children, medical assistance, residential facility and marriage expenses of their wards are provided. This could be done by raising a police fund. I would see to it that people were not scared of policemen rather they rushed to them for help and guidance.
I would eradicate bribery in government offices for doing genuine work and would not allow an office become a cowshed. I would put an end to the tradition of officials coming to their work or leaving their work at their own choice. Bureaucrats make an applicant pay scores of visits to his office to get a simple initials put his application. Officialdom has made it a practice to label a genuine work as something outside the routine and procedure only to grease their palms by harassing the applicant and forcing him to give bribes. I would impose work culture meaning wages according to work performed, salary according to attendance recorded and promotion according to service rendered.

The conditions of government hospitals are dismal. On entering a hospital one feels as if he has entered butchery. A look at the windows, walls and window panes gives an impression that these have not been cleaned for ages. There is no dusting and cleaning. One cannot look at obnoxious toilets including those for the children. It is extremely repulsive. Attitude of doctors in these hospitals is surprising. They seldom stick to time table. They may drop in sometime around one or two o'clock in the day, but are anxious to leave as early as possible. They are hectic and prescribe such medicines for the patients as make them habituated instead of getting cured. The patients are handed a letter saying that he needs anything between a hundred thousand and hundred fifty thousand rupees for his treatment. This makes a beggar of a patient.

If I had authority I would introduce medical insurance scheme so that patients could receive full medical treatment. I would see to it that Lal Ded Hospital is not a place of woe but a real nursing home for needy mothers and sisters. It would not be the abode of cats and rats of enormous size but a true hospital for human beings. I would ensure that there is an efficient blood bank arrangement in hospitals and patients have not to go about begging in the streets for blood donation. I would ensure that hospital ambulances are used for the patients only and not for taking doctors and nurses to their residences.

Judiciary:

Judicial system needs complete overhauling. People have to wait for 20 to 25 years to get their law suits decided. In most cases it is the grand child who sees the case decided and not his father or grandfather. A petitioner, who is made to cool his heels at the court and at the office of lawyers, is reduced to penury. I would dole out a few lessons to the lawyers to emphasize that if the court of law is the destination of justice then they are the light houses of justice. I would tell that theirs is a noble and not a satanic profession. Such lawyers as take more than one stand on a single case and get two or three verdicts issued would have no place in the bar council. I would salute such lawyers as would build bridges between justice and the petitioner and fix a maximum of six months for resolving a law suit.

Mobile and telephones are a necessity now-a-days. But the BSNL services in J&K are simply horrible. If you the apparatus, you have not the services: if you have the services, you have not the bills. There may be a fortunate fellow here or there who gets his monthly telephone bills. Invariably people have to fall in a long queue outside the telephone department to obtain their duplicate bills and then fall in again in another queue to make the payment. This is a job that takes at least three days. Conditions of mobile service are worse. One does not get the Airtel number from BSNL and if you get the BSNL number from Airtel, the tower Network is non-functional. When we move out of Srinagar towards Budgam, Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Nishat or Baramulla we find kids playing games on mobile telephones that cost thousands of rupees. We see this with our own hands and still do not open our mouth. I would not allow this to happen if I had authority.

Many young people are missing in Kashmir. Were they arrested by the police, security forces or the Army? Did they become missing after they were arrested? Were they killing while crossing the border or were they killed in training camps or in accidents, nobody knows. But their family members, mothers, sisters, wives, children and others are passing days in a state of expectancy and suffering the pangs of separation. I would constitute a Reconciliation Commission and request those responsible for arresting the missing people to at least give whatever little information

they can to the family members of the missing people so that they know the fate that has met their dear ones.

If I had authority, I would order immediate release of those who were released from prisons on the order of the court of law but were re-arrested and re-imprisoned. I would not allow a mother to be separated from her son, a sister from her brother and a wife from her husband. I would appoint an efficient and honest lawyer for each police station who would ensure that fake cases and FIRs are not filed against a respectable citizen out of prejudice or with the ulterior motive of obtaining bribe money from him. I would impose work culture on the rotten administrative and judicial system that exists today in our State. The work culture of which I am speaking would be based on honesty, hard work, and efficiency. I would create sense of human service, love for ones birth place and compatriots among our people. The purpose would be to create a new system, new thinking and new era of reconstruction. I would see to it that my compatriots no more needed to shed tears in despondency and helplessness. wish I had authority.

18-Dec-2006

Some disturbing aspects of current Kashmir situation

Some urgent business kept me away in Europe. I am sorry readers did not find my articles in the issues of Chattan after January 15, 2007. However, my latest article titled "Is the gun a friend or a foe?" was published in monthly Niya znameh of Lahore.

For last two months in particular a big joke is played with Kashmiris and the Kashmir issue. People are led along a path that would lead only to more disturbance and civil war. Just a year ago, Gilani faction of Hurriyat was a darling of Pakistan. Conditions changed suddenly, and within the twinkling of eye, Gilani was discarded and the robes of honour were offered to Mir Waiz. Small and single track groups aligned to Gilani faction were directed to strengthen the hands of Mirwaiz immediately. Thus began the game in which more blood of Kashmiri youth would be shed. It could as well be a precursor to a civil war. It hardly needs to be reminded that even at a time when the gun was brought into Kashmir different groups were created to work against each other. Innumerable youth were gunned down in lanes and on roads as a result of inter-group rivalry and fighting. After going through the era of the gun, and entering the period of political activity, we are still at the stage wherefrom we had begun the fratricide?

There are small groups in both factions of the Hurriyat that are for accession of the State to Pakistan. They vie with one another in their loyalty to Pakistan. Whatever literature they publish, it is within that one track perspective. It does not spell out how secession from India and accession to Pakistan can be brought about.

On the eve of Mirwaiz's departure to Pakistan, a bomb was blasted near his house. A general strike was called in the valley on 17 January 2007,

the day when he was schedule to leave. The Jihad Council, officially stationed in Muzaffarabad but actually operating from Islamabad, was a party to the call for strike. Some powerful circles made Mirwaiz believe that if he did not endorse their programme and formulae, then they had alternatives at their disposal. Although Mirwaiz and his group wield influence with and support of Pakistan's military regime yet the Jihad Council refused to meet with him. Some of our people may be astonished at this because the Yasin Group Liberation Front is a coalition partner of Jihad Council. Curiously, Mushtaq Zargar, the head of Al Umar — another partner of Jihad Council --- not only met with Mirwaiz but also managed his meetings with the representatives of LeT and Jaysh-e Muhammad organizations. Pakistani and foreign papers published the details of these meetings.

Slogans raised by the people at the reception given to Mirwaiz on his return from Pakistan indicated their complete loyalty to Pakistan. In the rally of the supporters of peace process, an astonishing slogan was raised: "Mirwaiz go ahead, Mushtaq is with you". Interestingly, Mirwaiz asserted in Pakistan that the gun had given to Kashmiris nothing but graveyards. He was echoing the words of late Abdul Gani Loan. This had invited quick reaction from Pakistan and the spokesperson of Pakistani foreign ministry was quick to state that these were personal views of Mirwaiz. Perhaps she was trying to discredit the statement of Mirwaiz and at the same time raise the morale of the gun wielders (in Kashmir).

In my article of 15 January 1991 published under the heading "Kahmir ki izzat aur waqar ka taqaza", I had said that if the movement went on like what it was, then, of course, we Kashmiris shall get nothing except graveyards, widows, orphans and desolation.

A few days ago, some questions were put to me in a briefing in Europe. These were:

1. If both factions of Hurriyat support J&K's accession to Pakistan, and have same thinking, why do they speak in different languages?

2. If Mirwaiz travelled to Pakistan on the invitation of Pakistan, why

did the Jihad Council decline to meet with him there despite the fact that Jihad Council receives moral, financial and logistic support from Pakistan and it was Pakistan who had invited him?

3. What was the purpose of arranging Mirwaiz's meeting with the representatives of LeT and Jayshe- Muhammad?

In the light of these questions, experienced commentators and political pundits are analysing the loyalty of both the groups to Pakistani establishment and her political parties. They are of the view that both groups of Hurriyat are the handmaids of Pakistani agencies advised to work separately but for one and only one purpose viz. carrying forward Pakistan's agenda in Kashmir. The purpose of contriving a meeting of the leaders of Al Umar, LeT and Jaysh with the Mirwaiz was only to boost his morale.

We know that during the period when the gun ruled the roost, activists of numerous organizations supporting accession to Pakistan slit each other's throat. Instead of taking the armed struggle to its logical conclusion, they indulged not only in fratricide but also became informers against one another. What was the result? We lost thousands of our youth, and arms and ammunition worth billions of rupees fell in the hands of Indian security forces. The factional game within the Hurriyat portends another spree of chaos, political upheaval and possibly a civil war at the end of the day. After making so many sacrifices, we are heading towards a mirage and not our cherished goal.

Dead bodies of some innocent people were exhumed in Ganderbal. A wave of resentment and anger overtook entire Jammu and Kashmir. The anger was mostly directed against STF and a few police officers. The Chief Minister thundered in the Legislative Assembly that if he opened his mouth the members would find many skeletons in the cupboard. We understand his remark was pointing towards the days of Governor's rule, NC rule and Mufti rule. Most of the scandals took place during those 17 years. Many innocent people were killed in the hope of that this would bring the killers awards and promotions. The worst is that even the faces of these victims were disfigured so that their identification was rendered impossible.

Killers of innocent people cannot escape retribution. The Chilean President had to account for all disappearances and murders right up to the day of his death. The former President of Argentine was arrested after 17 years under the orders of a Spanish court. In J&K fake enquiry commissions were constituted to examine the cases of innocent killings. These commissions just washed off the cases and did nothing more. Something has to be done to stem the tide. The Disturbed Arms Act should be immediately abrogated. All additional powers given to security forces and the army should be withdrawn. The allurement of giving stars to the policemen for killing militants should be stopped. The cases of police officers or policemen who were promoted on the basis of their gunning down militants should be reviewed by the full bench of the High Court. The jurisdiction of enquiry should be extended to cover disappeared cases. It should also take cognizance of police officers having raised properties disproportionate to their normal income. This will warn the miss doers that they are accountable for their actions. Unless the verdict of the High Court comes to let the law have its natural course, it will be difficult to counter the presumption that this has been the official policy of the Government of India.

As regards disappearances occurred during last 17 years, we would like to make an appeal to all those who have any information about those killed while crossing the border, those who died of disease in the training camps in Azad Kashmir, those who were killed in mutual strife, and those who remain interned in Pakistani jails to come out with true information. Many parents managed to obtain information through my sources about their dear ones who had crossed the border to receive training, about those who had married anywhere between Muzaffarabad and Karachi and settled down permanently.

The time has come that we prompt others to come out with truth about these cases. Mere rising of slogan will not do. We also strongly appeal to the Government of India that besides punishing the murderers, a sum of rupees ten lack per person killed or disappeared be sanctioned in favour of his family members.Let me refer to one more important matter. It is rumored that the office of Gilani Hurriyat Group has been closed in Islamabad. Mirwaiz faction considers it a feather in its cap, and also the vindication of its stand. But Mirwaiz should know that he has no stand of

his own whatsoever. Whenever he received a telephonic call from Pakistan, some people and parties from his group were shifted to Gilani – led Hurriyat. When need arose, they were shifted back to Mirwaiz faction by a simple telephone from Islamabad. Mirwaiz's stand on Kashmir is essentially the stand of Pakistani military regime. His group works as spokesperson of that regime in Kashmir. As regards the question of closing the office of Gilani faction, its stand is that the closed office happened to be that of Kashmir Centre and not of his faction. Mirwaiz of Hurriyat should know that whenever Mr. Kasuri, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan visits New Delhi, he invites Gilani also for a meeting. Mirwaiz has no reason to express his happiness on the closure of the office of Gilani faction in Islamabad. This can happen with him too. After all General Musharraf is not to live for all the time. Moreover, they should not forget the fate of the Taliban. Today Pakistan's military regime is catching them one by one and handing them over to the US. Likewise Gilani faction of Hurriyat should also desist from accusing Mirwaiz for so-called bargaining. So far Mirwaiz had not entered into any agreement with India. He has not allowed either India or Pakistan to establish hold on Kashmir.

The blast in Samjhota Express should put us to shame. Nearly 70 persons were killed in the accident; these included children, women and aged persons. Should a man do such an act of barbarity? If we call the killers beasts, it would be an insult to the beasts. We only hope that blasts such as happened in Samjhota Express or in Bombay train will not put Indo-Pak peace talks on hold. On the contrary, we hope that both countries will realise that peace process should be accelerated and not slowed down. That is how the enemies of peace can be defeated. It must be remembered that this blast has removed the difference of Indian and Pakistani blood. Despite shedding the blood of citizens of both countries, it has been proved that humanism is indivisible. The tragic incident has also brought home to the leaders in both countries that nobody is safe from terrorists.

26-Feb-2007

How long the politics of deceit?

On Indo-Pakistan level, step by step talks are going on to solve outstanding issues. It seems that dark clouds of hatred are gradually thinning out. But internal conditions in Pakistan are worsening day after day. With reference to war against terrorism, pressure is building on Pervez Musharraf's regime from the US and NATO. Illegal dismissal of the Chief Justice of Pakistani Supreme Court by General Musharraf has resulted in the emergence of a new movement within Pakistan, which puts a question mark on the legitimacy of the military regime. What shall be the direction of Indo –Pak relations in case Musharraf's regime collapses, depends on what sort of government succeeds him...

It was natural that relations between India and Pakistan would leave healthy impact on the conditions in J&K State. It was visible; militancy slowed down, and shedding the blood of innocent people as a result of grenade and bomb attacks on roads and public places also came down considerably. But neither the central nor the state government could exploit this situation positively. In order to bring relief to the people, the Special Army Act should have been withdrawn; custodial deaths stopped, unemployment eradicated, small industrial units promoted under self-employment schemes and state resources should have been utilized for the development and progress of the state. But unfortunately, the tragedy of political parties of India and of J&K State is that they have considered the lull before the storm as a lasting phase and thus perpetuated more atrocities on the people of the State. By betraying the people and breaking promises made to them, they have pushed them to the brink of poverty, destitution, disease and ignorance instead of ameliorating their condition. This can be witnessed in how the central government became a silent spectator in a process of local political parties making false promises to the people to secure votes from them in the forthcoming elections.

National Conference was once identified with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. But despite retaining power for nearly 22 years, the party failed to provide them basic facilities. It is true that Sheikh Sahib stood tallest among all political workers and parties. If we take only the Soura Medical Institute into account, it is sufficient to prove his love and care for his people. There was a time when he had ordered opening of 'Jabari Schools' where the children had to be brought forcibly in order to eradicate illiteracy from the State. But after his departure, National Conference turned into a tyrannical party unleashing state power against unwilling people. It has become the practice of National Conference to grab custodian, state and nuzul lands and allot contracts to their relatives and friends and solve their personal problems.

We don't know under what impulse the President of National Conference stated in a recent press conference that if the NC comes to power, it would provide one job to each family in J&K. At the moment total population of the State are around 1.5 corers, this computes roughly to 30 lakh families. One fails to understand how the NC is going to create 30 lakh jobs to redeem the claim of NC Chairman if his party comes to power. It was NC government which inducted SOG, and it was during the government of NC that a large number of innocent youth was arrested and declared disappeared. The same NC came out on the streets recently to protest against the violation of human rights and custodial deaths under the coalition government. They raised such a hue and cry as if they were themselves without a blemish.

The Lease law was passed by the Legislative Assembly during the rule of the NC. When the coalition government took step to implement this law, the NC protested. It even went to the length of joining the strike in protest of implementation of the lease law against Geelani. People's memory is not so short as to forget the utterances of the present NC chief when he was the Minister of State for External Affairs in the Government of India, and his father was the chief minister of J&K. Day in and day out, both issued statements demanding that the Government of India launch an attack on Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan and take these areas into its control if militancy was to be eradicated. But when the NC lost power, its leadership began issuing statements that put many circles to shame. They recommended talking to the militants, and were even prepared to

acquiesce to General Musharraf.This is also true of how Congress Party treated Kashmiris. When in power, it utilized the police force and administrative organs to expand the party network, and targeted the dissenting National Conference and separatists parities by its oppression and raw deals. It had no qualms of conscience in perpetrating general loot of the State's natural resources, and in reducing the people to penury and destitution. Since the Congress was in power at the centre, it pressurised National Conference into a coalition.

Assembly elections were held in 1987. Under the banner of Muslim United Front (MUF) Sayed Salahu'd-Din also fought election --- interestingly under Indian Constitution. The present JKLF chief Yasin Malik acted as his polling agent. Many irregularities took place in that election. Invoking the power of the State, MUF candidates were given a raw deal in police stations and lockouts. People connected with the MUF took to armed struggle. Salahu'd-Din's name tops the list of insurgents.

Congress has always given preference to party interests over national interest. This line of thinking has spread throughout India. If one asks for details of this policy pattern of the Congress, the best person to present a commentary would be Farooq Abdullah. He could write copiously on the theme. Then Mufti Saeed --- who had been shunted out of Congress ---, and his daughter Mahbuba Mufti appeared on Kashmir political scene. They raised the bogey of "healing touch" and PDP emerged as the third biggest party in the elections of 2002. A coalition government comprising Congress, PDP and independent candidates was formed. For three years the drumming up of the slogan of "healing touch" deafened the ears of Kashmiris. PDP led government's media hype was so virulent as to make one believe that everything was right in Kashmir. The fact is that even during that period killing, disappearances and loot and vandalizing continued unabated and with as much intensity as during past 60 years.

Indo-Pak peace talks did have partial impact on Kashmir situation and militancy was comparatively reduced. But instead of benefiting positively from it, PDP embarked on a massive propaganda campaign claiming that reduced militancy was the result of its policies. When its stipulated three year term ended, PDP tried hard that Mufti Saeed remains in the seat of chief minister. But Congress --- its coalition partner

--- took recourse to the understanding arrived at for power sharing, sent Ghulam Nabi Azad from Delhi to wear the crown of new chief minister of J&K. PDP created many hurdles in the path of the new government. It sank to the depths of moral degradation so much so that despite being partner in the government, it held the coalition government responsible for violation of human rights. How cleverly it tried to befool the unsuspecting public? Instead of taking a bold and moral step of resigning from the government on the issue of violation of human rights, it stuck to power like a leech.

Now for some time PDP leadership has adopted a new slogan of withdrawal of troops from the State. Obviousiy it is looking for a pretext to come out of coalition so as to project itself a hurt party. This gimmick is actually meant to befool the people and win their votes in the next election. But its discomfiture is that many of its MLAs want to disassociate with the government thus threatening possible collapse of the party. Therefore, the policy adopted is to remain inside the government but raise occasional alarm and blackmail it. In all three political parties there are MLAs who often hop in and out of the parties: they are with power and not with parties. Why did not Mufti ask for withdrawal of troops when he was the chief minister? The reality is that during last 60 years none of them; NC, PDP, Congress or BJP has solved people's problems nor can they solve them in future. Nepotism, bribery, corruption, oppression of the poor and favours for the rich, all this has gone into the blood of these parties.

People had many expectations from the present chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. He held important positions in the Central government for more than 30 years. Much is talked about his vision, thinking and honesty. Soon after taking the oath of office, he made tall claims of eradicating corruption, ignorance, nepotism etc. from the system. I published a satirical article under the caption "Some useful pieces of advice for the chief minister" in the Chattan issue No. 40 for the period 14 - 20 November 2006. The piece identified some of our major problems. Azad appears to have read that article because he acted precisely as I had suggested. He made tall claims of seeing to it that illegal possession of state, custodian and nuzul lands by the land mafia was vacated. He even mentioned the total measurement of these lands around 20 lakh kanals and computed its price something like 25 thousand crores. But

unfortunately while this declaration was still resounding in the air, he made another announcement shortly after saying that the government would give ownership rights to the holders of these plots against reduced cost. He virtually meant to say that illegal occupants would be allowed not only to retain the land they have grabbed but would also be given some prize for doing so.

This is how general loot of the state property is encouraged. Unfortunately Azad is bogged with strife within the coalition. Extending his support to the bureaucracy, he is walking along the chartered route on which his predecessors walked. Had he chosen to walk shoulder to shoulder with the masses of the people, much could have been achieved during last two years.

Recently there was a heavy snowfall. The valley, Ladakh and Kargil remained cut off from the rest of the world. Necessities of life and eatables vanished from the market; electricity was shut down; medicines were not available. An enquiry from the officials brought forth a strange reply: "This was an unexpected snowfall". One cannot make out how the terms like expected and unexpected should be defined? J&K is a state where rains, snow and storms can come at any time. In all countries of the world, there is a Crisis Management organization. But in this state we are living a life of the 18th and not 21st century. Azad brushed the whole issue aside by calling it a conspiracy against the government. Who is responsible for the difficulties caused to people on account of this snowfall? Frequent roadblocks justify the demand of pro-Pak elements for accession to Pakistan. If we were linked to Rawalpindi road, and that were our national highway, the people of the state would have been spared the suffering and difficulties caused by recurring road blocks. During past 60 years India has not built a road from Jammu to Ladakh, which would remain open round the year. Bulbul Shah Road was to be constructed from Nishat to Harwan under central government's Nabard programme. The MLA of Sonwar constituency got it cancelled. People of the locality expressed anger and resentment on cancelling the construction. It was revealed that some National Conference activists had planted trees which would have to be felled when the road was constructed. They did not want to suffer the loss and therefore stopped the construction of the road. Does this happen here? 26-March-2007

False promises, false hopes, False expectations and our attitude?

We Kashmiris are worst enemies of our own people. The toll of people killed in the on - going militancy is anywhere between 70 and 80 thousand. But our political or separatist parties have yet to arrive at a unanimous view on whether J&K is a part of India or that we should have internal autonomy or self-rule. In the context of PDP's demand of withdrawal of army from the state, the NC Chief doled advice to the chief minister that as a reaction to the pressures from the Prime Minister, he should resign.

The NC chief needs to be reminded that during his party's rule, a majority of legislators gave their consent to internal autonomy bill but the rulers in Delhi spurned it with a grin. When communal clashes in Gujarat took place, neither the NC government in J&K nor the present Chief of NC who also happened to be the Minister of State in the External Affairs Ministry at that time thought it necessary to resign. When Saifu-Din Soz voted against BJP government, he was shunted out from NC. So we find that NC has different measuring yardsticks for similar issues.

What have these ruling parties given to Kashmir during last 60 years of freedom? It is loot, corruption, poverty disease, unemployment, nepotism, pollution and depletion of water resources, oppression, exploitation and false promises. Despite taking oath of loyalty to the Indian constitution repeatedly, they accept and own the manifesto of separatist parties. In Delhi, they boastfully declare their loyalty to India but in Islamabad they are more than willing to acquiesce. The much confused people of Kashmir now understand that these parties are loyal neither to India nor to Pakistan and that taking recourse to lies and deceit they are prepared to go to any length to keep them secured in the seats of power. The antagonism, which these parties nurse against one another, is a clear indication that they have no agenda for the welfare of the nation. Except denigrating one another they have nothing to offer. Are not they

misleading the people by false promises, false hopes, and false expectations? One common approach that had marked separatist parties was that the people of Jammu and Kashmir should be given the right of self-determination. Some of these parties concede that according to their party constitution, India and Pakistan, both are in control of respective parts of the State. But how many of them are practically involved in a struggle against this control on both sides of the line. We are aware of it.

Hurriyat is divided into two factions, each claiming to be an amalgam of 22 or 23 smaller groups. A close analysis shows that neither of the two factions has a representation in any one of the regions of the State. In addition, some parties associated with them are similar in name. For example, Muslim Conference group lead by Abdul Gani Bhat is a coalition partner of Umar Farooq faction of Hurriyat But on the basis of ego or personal vendetta, Ghulam Nabi Sumji heading another Muslim Conference group is a partner of Geelani faction of Hurriyat. Thus we find different groups of the same party becoming coalition partners of one or the other Hurriyat faction. The amusing and rather unfortunate part of it is that all those parties that form the two coalitions of the Hurriyat are bound by their constitution and manifesto to opt for accession to Pakistan. Yet notwithstanding that each group accuses the other of being somebody's agent. They frame various charges against each other such a making business deals of martyrs, not understanding ground realities and selling out Kashmiri nation and etc.

These groups are not only bossing over the militants but have also been instrumental in the martyrdom of thousands of our youth in the name of jihad. Having done that, they never created any institution that would care for the rehabilitation of widows, orphans and parents of martyred persons. The families of these martyrs would not have been forced to beg in the streets and do such things as would bring dishonour to the name of a martyr. The kith and kin of the martyred people were forced to build cases for receiving Ex-gratis relief from the government (against which their martyrs had taken up the guns). And the two factions of Hurriyat are busy in raising slogans, giving calls for strikes and doing factional politics. No wonder if the people in Kashmir are disgruntled with both. They come to the graves of their dear ones to shed tears of repentance why they had trusted word of these leaders. Some organizations, which previously

formed part of Hurriyat, are now broken into several groups. Liberation Front has five groups: Amanullah Group, Yasin Malik Group, Javed Mir Group, Nanaji Group and Rauf Group. The amusing point is that all of them are for Independent Kashmir. In the same manner Peoples Conference, Muslim League and Peoples League are also divided into several groups. We don't know the reason for this division. But taking day to day events as the substance of their politics, they have developed amazing capacity for self – delusion, and also of misleading the people. What is more regrettable is that all these political groups know it very well that without unity, without factionalism and without minimum common plan of action, they can never gain real power to do something for the people. But of course with all these dissensions raging furiously among them, they can continue their individual existence and by defrauding the people and the nation they can create more suffering, poverty and ignorance for their future generations. And the people tolerate them. Everywhere we hear the cliché that power lies with people. But in J&K we see the reverse of it; to wit, people are the fountain head of oppression, tyranny, injustice, ignorance and loot. We have reason to make this statement:

Political parties in power approach the people begging their votes and making promises of providing them with roads, water, education, employment, medicare, peace and progress. But knowing that these parties did really nothing to alleviate their grievances or provide them with relief and facilities during past 60 years, they still fall in their trap at the time of voting for elections.

The conditions of hospitals are extremely disappointing. Medicines provided by the government are not at all available in the hospitals but in the shops outside the premises of the hospitals, which are owned by close relatives of the employees of hospitals. Corruption is so rampant that officers have been caught accepting bribes in their offices. How strange that people gifted by God with intelligence, conscience, understanding and power of analysis continue to be oppressed for sixty long years. They are excited to hear their false promises. And if at all a promise is fulfilled, it is only for the near and dear ones of these politicians.

Before and during the PDP rule, we find nearly 195 lawyers, close relatives of ministers and among the most favored ones, appointed as official lawyers. The Bar Council, which is supposed to protect the interests of the people and their own profession --- indeed a noble one -- thought it fit to turn a blind eye to the issue. The time has come when people should stop to be misled by the charlatans and political jugglers. They should not allow anybody from among this deceitful political class to take them for a ride. The vote is a powerful and a pious property. People should know its value and never allow it to be misused. How long should they make experiments with the false promises, expectations and hopes generated by the deceitful political leadership of the sort we have described?

Anybody who can transcend political ideology and look at things from humanitarian point of view will feel pained to know that the US refused visa to Ali shah Geelani. He wanted to be treated for some ailment. This should open the eyes of those who consider the US their Messiah, and the upholder of human rights.

PDP is obsessed with the issue of withdrawal of troops from Kashmir. This euphoria boiled down to the formation of a few committees. This added to the difficulties of the people. Now without the intervention of these committees neither a bunker in the town can be dismantled nor can the Chief Minister --- also the Chairman of Unified Command Council --- take any decision regarding the movement and deployment of security forces. Prior to the formation of these committees, an SP or SHO could get a bunker dismantled or a military camp removed. Now this is not possible. This is the new gift of 2007 from the PDP to the people of the State, which it obtained in return of agreeing to work on the old wage-scale. Nobody knows what more is up the sleeves of PDP in a bid to run away with the agenda of Hurriyat. PDP fights elections after taking an oath of allegiance to the Indian Constitution. We are apprehensive that its dichotomy may prove disastrous for them? A minister of the coalition government, Hakim Yasin has labelled the central government as deceitful and the committees as fraudulent. He has called it a joke with and befooling of the people of Kashmir. This is what we call an insider spilling the beans. 09-April-2007

Depressing condition of the dependents of martyrs!

The proof of a nation's moral existence lies in the quality and quantity of relief, which its leadership, its affluent sections and its masses provide to the next of kin of those martyrs who sacrificed their lives for a cause. The movement can be kept alive only when those at its helm take full care of the dependents of martyrs. I am reminded of an incident. A widow of a martyr was in tears and said that she had not a bowl of rice to make her children a meal. Leaders of the movement for freedom of Kashmir came to offer her condolences on the fourth day of the death of her martyred husband. They presented her a copy of the holy Qur'an and a profusion of pieces of advice to be patient with her destiny. No one from among the visiting leaders or their organizations asked her how she, with orphaned kids around her, was seeking out her miserable existence.

This incident became the catalyst for me to write this piece. I just want to ask our leaders and our nation, and particularly those who assert that Kashmiris do not hesitate to make the sacrifice of their lives, what is the actual condition of the dependents, especially the womenfolk of our martyrs? This woman's father, husband, brother and daughter all are martyrs. She is a destitute. I would ask all my detractors to stop castigating me for unveiling the facts and do some introspection. I hope none of my readers has lost his conscience, and that they will come forward voluntarily to help such critical cases.

The main reason for any movement to succeed in past or in future is the presence of a powerful political platform. This platform should have institutions of its own to tackle the issues that arise in the course of the movement's march onwards. These institutions are the key to the success of the movement. We do not mean to hold any particular organization or leader or individual responsible for what our movement lacks. We only want to shed some light on the depressing condition of the kith and kin, widows, orphans, mothers and sisters of the martyrs. A few

details that have come to our notice are stated below. This information has come to us through the kith and kin of the martyrs whom we provide modest succour at MANWA. We shall also say something about how those people are treated who bade farewell to the gun and took the path of non violence and peace. We need not mention the organizations with which these martyrs were associated. Their names speak for their organizations.

01 Ghulam Jeelani was martyred in Bemina. His four sisters and his father live in a miserable condition. The responsibility of marrying two sisters of Jeelani fell on the shoulders of his aged father and one of them was married in 2004. How the old man managed it is difficult to explain.

02 Muhammad Salim Sheikh of Astan Mohalla was martyred in Natipora. He was the only son of his mother who is now almost begging for her survival.

03 Bashir Ahmad Mir alias B2 son of Abdul Gani of Ahan Ganderbal was martyred in 1996. His brother too was gunned down by security forces. For some reasons his third brother too was killed by unknown gunmen. His family comprising three widows and 20 children is looked after by his aged father and one brother. They are just dragging their lives.

04 Muhammad Ayub Khan alias Amir Khan Son of Nasrullah Khan of Gund Gandbal was martyred in 1995. He is survived by his widow and five daughters. They either beg or do some manual labour to earn their two square meals.

05 Abdul Rashid Rishi alias Pasha of Nasal was martyred in 1997. His widow and four orphaned kids living separately are destitute.

06 Muhammad Maqbool Wagay was martyred in 1996. His widow and five orphaned children are living a miserable life.

07 Ghulam Hassan Khan hailed from Sonabrad in Islamabd. He was martyred on April 18, 2007. He is survived by three children, three

brothers, his widow and aged father. His widow remarried entrusting the orphans to their grandfather. The misfortune dogged the family. Security forces killed all the three brothers, Aejaz Khan, Mukhtar Khan and Muhammad Abbas Khan. Ghulam Hassan Khan was associated with KLF, Ajaz with HM and Mukhtar Ahmad with Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen. The fourth brother Muhammad Abbas was killed for the sins of his brothers. Security forces demanded of him to surrender the arms of his deceased brothers. The house was blown up by security forces. Somebody gave the orphans the address of MANWA which has undertaken to provide expenses on the education of one girl child. (In this case I am obliged to name the organization to which these martyrs were affiliated).

08 Muhammad Ashraf Lone alias Tawsif son of late Salam Lone of Khandurah was martyred in 1992. His widowed mother sold her house to marry her grown up daughter. She has one more daughter of marriageable age. How she to manage her life is what we cannot imagine.

09 Muhammad Yusuf alias Basharat of Rawalpora was martyred in 1992. He is survived by three orphan children and a handicapped widow who does menial jobs to feed the kids.

10 Ghulam Muhammad alias Maqsud, son of Ghaffar Dar of Rawalpora was martyred In 1992 His widow is eking out a iserable living along with her three orphan children In her father's house.

11 Muhammad Siddiq of Mirpora had been a senior commander of an organization. His six orphan children and widow are struggling for life. His house was also razed To ground. The organization to which her late husband was affiliated had promised To provide her succour but nobody even cast a glance at them till date.

12 Muhammd Ramazan Wani alias Musayyib of Anzpora, Beru the battalion commander of an organization was martyred in an inter-group shootout. He is survived by his widow and four orphaned daughters all of marriageable age. His widow sold the paddy machine in order to feed her children.

13 Rahul Sheikh alias Fla of Biruwah was martyred in 1995. He is survived by his widow, two orphan children and an aged mother. The humanitarian sense of the people of the village remains dead, and nobody has come forward to offer her some help

14 Bashir Ahmad alias Basharat of Wanigam Biruwah, Budgam, left behind six orphans and a widow who sold her shop to feed the family.

15 Nasirul Islam was the Amir of two organizations. He hailed from Budgam. His family is in such a depressed condition that it is neither alive nor dead.

16 Shamsul Haq had done Molavi Fazil and double MA. He hailed from Sonurkali Pora in Biruwah. Twelve members of his family were martyred leaving behind 13 widows and children.They are living a miserable life.

17 Maqbul Ilahi had done M.Sc and his wife is graduate. Our nation is insensitive to the extent that the son of this martyr is working as a semi-skilled labourer.

18 Anwar Islam was a Deputy Commander. He is survived by his widow and an orphan child passing days in penury.

19 Jameel Muhammd Bhat and Hamid Bhat were associated with two different organizations. They left behind their widowed mother and two sisters. The mother has been given pacemaker and the father suffered heart attack on hearing the news of his second son's death. One of his sisters got married but she was divorced by her wicked husband within days. The husband of the second daughter has also been killed. The aged mother is carrying the burden of her daughters and their children.

20 Muhammd Yusuf alias Idris was martyred in an inter-group clash in Dargah while trying to protect the leader of his organization. He

is survived by his widow and two orphans daughters, both now grown up. A trust has offered to take care of educational expenses for the two daughters. The widow has been taught stitching so as to help her stand on her legs. The widow of Shahid Idris Khan was turned out of her home by her in-laws along with her children soon after her husband's martyrdom.

21 Muhammd Ashraf Dar belonged to Sonwarakali Pora. He was among the founders of an organization. His widow and four orphaned children are in a state of penury cursing the organization which brought disaster to the family.

22 Zahid Khan son of Abdur Rahman Khan of Mandir Bagh was martyred in 1990. He was the only son of his parents.

23 Rajeh, Mil and Pren three brothers of Fateh Kadal were martyred in 1993. Their mother and brother became mentally deranged. One bother feeds the entire family, and with great difficulty.

24 Muhammad Yusuf Waza left behind him a widow and three small children. The in-laws of the widow provided no succour to her. She remarried after some time and the family of the martyr suffers.

25 Fayaz Ahmad Sheikh son of Ghulam Hassan Sheikh was martyred in 2002. His house was burnt. He is survived by aged parents, widow, four orphaned children and two unmarried sisters. One of the girls was married under great financial constraints. The tragedy did not end at that. This girl's husband was also martyred by security forces and this widowed girl is to be re-married. The family is under great financial stress.

26 Gulzar Ahmad Wani of Batmaloo left behind him his widow and two daughters and a crippled brother. His widow works as kitchen maid to sustain her children. Her in-laws turned her out of their house soon after the martyrdom of Gulzar Ahmad.

27 Ghulam Ahmad Bhat's brother was a militant. In place of his brother, Ghulam Ahmad was martyred by the security forces.His wife and two

children were turned out of their house by her in-laws leaving the family of the martyr in destitution.

28 Farooq Ahmad Mir was martyred in 2001 leaving behind his widow and two children. Nobody cared for them. They come from Kaner in Budgam and the widow is getting some small amount by way of support from Social Welfare. A welfare organization is bearing the expenses on the education of the two children. Life is extremely harsh for them.

29 Ghulam Hassan Thakur belonged to Kunzar, Chadura. He was martyred by his militant fraternity leaving behind four children. The widow and the children were turned out by in-laws for their house. She is working as house maid in people's homes. It is so sad to know that three orphaned sons of the martyr were taken back by their grandfather through a court order but he left his granddaughter to the care of the martyr's widow. She is now living with her parents.

This is the story of just a few out of 70 or 80 thousand martyrs. Although I have cited only 29 case but the truth is that 80 to 90 per cent of the families of martyrs are facing same situation. Society hesitates to have matrimonial alliance with the daughters or widows or sisters of these martyrs.

The anti-people government harasses their kith and kin. They feel that they are neither with the militant groups nor with non-militant sections of society. Young people who have given up the path of violence are humiliated by security agencies, army, and police by ordering them to report their attendance at one or the other police station or a camp. In camps they are made to do some chores.

Finding a bride for the released militants is a problem for them. They are not an earning hand. If any among them has a source of subsistence, he is required to report to the police station regularly. Thus they gradually lose this source of small income. On assuming power, PDP chief minister, Mufti Saeed made tall promises of rehabilitation of released youth. Alas, as usual, these were hollow promises. Youth already released can be

called to the police station by any agency or police authority in the name of militancy. They are allowed to come out only after they or their relatives grease the palms of concerned authorities. Released youth are threatened and intimidated to become informers and if any of them refuses, he is put behind bars. With this policy is in force, can peace prevail?.

These martyrs and their relatives have some questions for the leadership of this nation.

01 When our martyrs took up arms, the entire nation euphorically adored them. They were invited to feasts as very special guests: they were sought after for matrimonial alliance. But today their dependents beg for a morsel. Matrimonial alliance with them is considered almost a sin. Why is it so?

02 Why have those organizations and leaders with whom the martyrs were associated become impassive? These leaders spend millions of rupees on public rallies only to enhance their fame.

03 If the nation and all organizations cannot come together to support and sustain our (martyrs') families, then what is the use of raising hollow slogans and dragging more youth to the brink of annihilation?

04 There are NGOs and organizations which have opened their shops in the name of our martyrs without providing an iota of succour to their families. Undoubtedly, one day the dependents of martyrs will call them to account.

05 A big question is raised about the insensitivity and brazenness of our society. Those who threw out the widows and orphans of the martyr from their homes are answerable to God for their treachery. Our religion emphatically tells us to care for the orphans. Those who sacrificed their precious lives did not do so for their person or family. They made sacrifices because the leaders of this land or their supporters in Pakistan or the people at the helm of affairs told them that sacrificing their lives meant either accession to Pakistan or obtaining freedom for Jammu and Kashmir. Do they intend to convey

a new message to the dependents of these martyrs that in the eyes of leaders and the nation those objectives are dead? Should we, therefore, tell these dependents of martyrs that after witnessing their destitution, the sacrifice made by the martyrs was a crime and they (dependents) have to pay a price for it? How aptly the poet says:

"Main kis ke hath par apna lahu talash karun
Sarey shahar ne pahne hue hain dastane"

(On whose hands should I look for the stains of my blood?
Entire city has worn hand gloves)

23-april-2007

Sardar Qayum's shift on Kashmir: Helplessness or Opportunism?

In the last week of April, Sardar Qayyum happened to be in Delhi in connection with a conference. He met with the Prime Minister, various political leaders and the media. One should appreciate Sardar Qayym's courage for plain speaking on Kashmir issue in view of changing political scenario in the world. Some circles might not have felt happy with it. Innumerable articles, commentaries and write-ups were printed in newspapers.

I too met him twice, each meeting lasting more than two hours. He talked plain. He said," I know that gun has power because I, too, had taken up the gun at a certain point of time in my life. But today the gun has become the instrument of destruction and death for the Kashmiris. This is because the whole world has united against the use of gun. Kashmir leadership on both sides of the line should give a proof of their pragmatism. There is only one way of saving the Kashmiris from destruction and annihilation. They should take part in the talks; roads should be opened for the people on both sides; any foreign militant holed up in the valley or in the J&K should be give safe passage. The demand for safe passage for foreign militants comes in the background that these young people are getting killed in twos and threes throughout Jammu and Kashmir. Trade agreements with Kashmiris should be concluded so that poverty is reduced. Pakistan is going through challenging times and can no more support the gun." Sardar Qayyum regretted that Kashmir political parties did not take part in the round table conference and at the same time appreciated my decision of attending it.

Sardar Qayyum spoke candidly with media persons. He accepted that in the past militant training camps existed in Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan. But these didn't exist now.

Sardar Qayyum is a person with whom I have ideologically differed for the whole of our life. During his tenure of Presidency of Azad Kashmir, a ban was imposed on my entry into Azad Kashmir no fewer than eight times. In 1984, I was mercilessly beaten like a beast in Muzaffarabad prison. I received injury and my nose bled. Sardar Qayyum always stood by the stand that Jammu and Kashmir can be liberated from the occupation of India only through jihad. His lifelong slogan has been "Kashmir banega Pakistan" (Kashmir will become Pakistan). He held the position of the President and the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir several times. His party, namely Muslim Conference remained in power at least for 45 years out of 60 years of independence. It is in power even today and his son Sardar Atiqu'r-Rahman is the Prime Minister there. Thus Muslim Conference and Sardar Qayyum are inseparable. There was a time when a strange slogan was heard everywhere in Azad Kashmir: "one who is not in Muslim Conference is not a Musalman".

People supporting the proposition of Independent Kashmir were always labelled by Sardar Qayyum and his Muslim Conference as traitors and Indian agents. When Maqbool Bhat was martyred, he made this comment," Maqbool Bhat was an agent of India. When India did not need him, they executed him." In 1990 militant organizations were created in Kashmir. Sardar Qayyum too formed the al-Mujahid. It may be reminded that in 1969, too, he had formed an organization by the same name and collected crores of rupees in its name in UK and Arab countries. It's headquarter was in the Satellite Town,Rawalpindi. At that time also he had raised the slogan of getting freedom for Jammu and Kashmir. Sardar Qayyum's political rivals gave it the name of "Al-Mujahid wal Chandah." It did not launch any armed struggle and remained limited to papers.

Forty years of Sardar Qayyum's past and political career force us to think why he has now changed his stand, and is for adoption of a flexible attitude to find a solution to the Kashmir issue. The man, who once talked of hoisting his flag on the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi, has come on a visit to India after obtaining a visa from an Indian visa officer in its High Commission in Islamabad. Here in Delhi he is talking of peace and mutual dialogue.

Making good use of political commonsense and ground situation, let us

not make any unbridled statement on the changing stance of Sardar Qayyum. We should focus on the question that now in the context of Kashmir issue Sardar Qayyum no more needs to be in active politics. His son, Sardar Atiq, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, made an open confession in a press conference held a few days ago that jihadi camps existed in Azad Kashmir where not only Kashmiri youth but others from Pakistan and Afghanistan also received training and continued jihad in Kashmir. He added that instead of trying to throw dust into people's eyes, it should be admitted that training camps existed in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan.

In the past if any one of us spoke of existence of training camps, we were labelled as traitors and Indian agents. Many well known leaders were martyred for speaking the truth. Among these for example are Molavi Farooq, Abdul Gani Lone and Dr. Ghulam Qadir Wani.

Today in changed circumstances, one who confesses the existence of jihadi camps in Azad Kashmir is its Prime Minister and the other person is his father who has close contacts with Pakistani establishment, politicians, rulers, and army and also with the American State Department.

Political leaders in Jammu and Kashmir ought to learn a lesson from these changing realities.They must realise that it will not be possible to pull the people of the State and particularly of the Valley out of quagmire without taking part in a dialogue and in peace process. The organizations that launched the movement in the State on the basis of pledges made to them by the Pakistani military regime and its rulers, should take into account the domestic situation in Pakistan, bloodshed in Afghanistan and above all the compulsions of Pakistan. The gun and bomb blasts, which received tacit support from Pakistan till yesterday, have today become a nightmare for the Pakistani society. Kashmiris should know it well that no country will rush to the support of others while its own integrity is imperilled. The changed stance of Sardar Qayyum shall have to be assessed in the background of a changed world scenario. Instead of hurling accusations on him, we should accept his suggestions and agree to talk to India. Otherwise what might happen is that circumstances will give the mainstream the right to represent the people, and that is

the Governor of the area. If Gilgit and Baltistan were part of Pakistan, the British would have handed it over to them and not to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. If any part of the State were given the right to accede to India or Pakistan, then Maharaja Hari Singh's accession would have been final.

The need to recount these facts of history arises in the context of a letter written by a Pakistani Ambassador in a European country to the European Union headquarters. In it he stated that the people of Gilgit and Baltistan had acceded to Pakistan in 1947. Therefore 28 thousand square miles area of Gilgit and Baltistan is part of Pakistan. However, Sardar Atiq Khan, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, and some nationalist organizations expressed their forceful resentment against this statement, and asserted that Gilgit and Baltistan were inseparable parts of the State. They added that whenever a decision about the entire State was taken, the opinion of the people of the area would also be sought.

Much hue and cry was raised in Pakistani official circles and on both sides of the line in J&K on the Kashmir Report of Emma Nixon (?). Finally, some small amendments were made to the original draft, which was passed in the European Parliament with a majority of 590 votes.. Only 9 votes were cast against the resolution. According to the Pakistani authorities, the report that went altogether in favour of India was adopted. This could be interpreted as a message to us the people of Jammu and Kashmir, that whatever the solution of Kashmir tangle, it has to come through dialogue and through peaceful means.

The Chairman of one faction of People's Party, Sajad Gani Lone --- the illustrious son of Abdul Gani Lone---called a rally to commemorate the anniversary of his father's martyrdom. On this occasion, he made a stunning statement: he said that "if the people of Ladakh and Jammu want to separate, let they be separated and the valley, too, should be separated as Muslim Kashmir". This was no less than a bolt from the blue to those persons and circles who knew Lone Sahib and the story of his struggle very well. Although the people of Jammu and Ladakh have many grievances against the rulers of the valley, yet the demand of dividing the State into three parts had come during the armed conflict first from RSS and Jammu Front. Political pundits thought it was employing pressure



Zahid Farooq **(Shaheed)**
of Brein, Was Shot dead by BSF
at Nishat on 05 Feb 2010 While he was playing Circket.



Inayat **(Shaheed)**
was shot by forces and then mercilessly crushed under the vehicle they were driving
at
Lal Chowk on 8th January 2010

tactics on the people of the valley.

Division of the State along communal lines was the basis of Owen Dixon Plan. The plan of dividing the State along Muslim and non-Muslim lines was also inherent in the solution formulae proposed by Pakistani rulers including the more recent plan of General Musharraf. In an overall estimation, all political and other circles in Jammu and Kashmir have opposed the division of the State on the basis of religion. A closer look reveals that the State stands practically divided since last sixty years. But mentally and ideologically the people have not accepted the present division. After the resumption of bus service across the line we find that the attitude of the people in Mirpur and Kotli and other areas on that side and of those in Jammu region on this side speaks a lot of fraternal sentiment transcending the division into Muslim and non-Muslim. The Muslims of Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber and other places prefer to meet with the non-Muslim friends in Jammu region rather than with the Muslims of the valley.

The question that needs to be answered is not whether the State should be divided? The question that has to be answered is whether by slicing the State, Kashmir issue will be solved? Are we sure that division along religious lines will not create new problems like permanent separation of people from one another, more exodus of people and a new sources of conflict? Partition of 1947 resulted in the migration of millions of people from one area to another, thousands were slaughtered, and thousands of respectable families were humiliated. The result of that partition on the basis of two-nation theory is before us. Nearly 50 crores of Indian Muslims were divided, and, in the process, neither Bangladesh nor Pakistan could practically become a Muslim state. People in both of them are still victims of poverty, exploitation and illiteracy. In both the countries, military regimes held sway intermittently. Indian Muslims, who made sacrifices for Pakistan and left their ancestral land to prosper in the new country, are still called mohajirs (migrants). Many Muslims from Bihar sacrificed everything for Pakistan and migrated to East Pakistan in the aftermath of the partition of 1947, are still living in camps and eking out a miserable life. Although Bangladesh is a Muslim county, yet it refuses to absorb the Bihari migrant Muslims.

Indian Muslims are suspected ever since the partition of the country took place. They are discriminated against in education, employment opportunities, business and other walks of life. They do not get the share proportionate to their numbers. This is notwithstanding the fact that stalwart Muslim leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Maulana Nadvi and the President today (Dr. A.P.J. Kalam) have been in the centre stage of civil society. The strength of 50 crores of Muslims was fragmented by the partition; they were divided and the walls of hatred were raised.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir has an area of 84771 square miles. The Valley from Jawahar Tunnel up to Zoji La and from Pahalgam to Uri has an area of 8000 thousand square miles. This means the portion of undivided area of the State to the tune of 76000 square miles fills the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. The densely populated area is 8000 square miles. The Valley has no economy of its own; its water resources are drying or have already dried up; arable land is fast getting converted into constructional land; industries are conspicuous by their absence, and means of livelihood are not only scarce but actually non-available. How then are the Muslims going to survive in the Valley of Kashmir?

When the people of the valley demand division of Kashmir along religious lines, they should not forget that in that situation the Muslims living in various districts of Jammu and Ladakh will be exposed to horrendous communal clashes. The brutality of 1947 could be repeated. They may have to leave their homes and seek shelter in the "Muslim Kashmir". And the Muslims of Kashmir will identify these migrants as Paharis, Gujjars, and Ladakhis etc.

Therefore, if we demand division of the State along religion then the worst punishment will be reserved only for the Kashmir valley meaning Muslim Kashmir. We say this all in terms of education, economy, geography, resources and above all in a prospect of the valley getting isolated from the rest of the world. The business of Kashmiri traders and their properties spread throughout India and Jammu region will be looted and vandalised. If we keep in mind the consequences of division before the division actually takes place, we shall shudder at the mere thought of it.

Another formidable wall of hatred will be raised in the sub-continent.

More than fifty countries of European continent have agreed on a common currency. They have virtually pulled down the boundaries that divided them. Economic and mutual relations are forged without boundaries obstructing them. United States, Canada and Mexico are transcending geographical boundaries in their mutual relationship. If the SAARC is desirous of opening borders of the countries in South Asia, how come that a small State of Jammu and Kashmir, already divided into three parts, is to be further sliced. What political, moral and religious justification is there for such a step?

On the occasion of death anniversary of his martyred father Maulavi Farooq, Mirwaiz (of Hurriyat) asserted that self rule meant our own Prime Minister, Supreme Court and President. Does he want to have the same phoney structure in Kashmir as we find in Azad Kashmir? What is the position and importance of the President and the Prime Minister there? Sardar Qayyum would be in a better position to explain. Although he was the President of Azad Kashmir, yet an inspector of Federal Security Force threw him out of the Presidential House. K.H. Khurshid, once Private Secretary of Qaid-e Azam, and later on President of Azad Kashmir, was bodily dumped by an SP in a jeep and asked to write down his resignation letter. During the government of Nawaz Sharif, an army major huddled Mumtaz Rathore (then Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir) into a helicopter and flew him to Islamabad where he was put under house arrest in Kashmir House in order to obtain his resignation. If Azad Kashmir type arrangement is recommended for our State, then I would request Mirwaiz to go through my book Unveiling of the Truth chapter 'Why Azad Kashmir should be called Pok? He will find that no fewer than 58 portfolios of administration are run by the Secretary of Kashmir Affairs.

It appears that Mirwaiz thinks that international climate and the interests of India and Pakistan at the moment are conducive to finding a solution of Kashmir problem. As such, Mirwaiz would not like to repeat Geelani's obduracy. Hence he looks for an escape route. That is why for some time he ran after Musharraf's self-rule proposal but only to shift to autonomy proposal of the National Conference. The organizations which these leaders are heading, owe too much to the youth whose blood has been

spilt in the struggle. That is why they shift frequently from one formula to another, from one slogan to another only to gauge the mood of the people.

People expected them to concede the truth and carve a straight path for them to walk on. They expected them to forge unity among all organizations, field their candidates in the forthcoming elections, educate each voter to cast his or her vote and at the end of the day, having captured majority of seats in the assembly, submit their resignations precisely as happened in Lithuania. This would have resulted in a big show of their strength, their demands and their thinking. But look at the poverty of political expertise. The Mirwaiz faction of Hurriyat deputed Advocate Sheikh Rauf to Geneva as its representative. Surprisingly, the same Advocate Rauf happens to be the defence counsel of SSP Parihar involved in fake encounter cases. When there is such blatant contradiction in word and deed, it will be called calumny and nothing else.

04-june-2007

Attacks on Kashmiri leaders in Jammu: Separatists and future elections

Shiv Sena is a known extremist Hindu organization in India. Its antecedents reveal that Sena leaders and activists have usually identified themselves with attacking poor Muslims. By causing clashes and intimidating people on the occasion of festivals, this organization has laid the foundation of its politics on spreading fear.

In Jammu province, too, Shiv Sena has adopted the same strategy. They had attacked late Abdul Gani Lone in a press conference in Jammu and disrupted the programme. Shiv Sena goons attacked Ali Shah Geelani thrice. On 20 June, they made an attempt of attacking me in the course of a seminar organized by an organization named Roots in Kashmir. I must make it clear that in that seminar I did not say anything about Geelani but when an assailant jumped on to the platform and moved viciously towards me, I shouted at him to sit down and said that I was not going to tolerate it as Geelani did.. In the meanwhile, the organizers of the conference grabbed him and threw him out. Shiv Sena activists could not sabotage the conference, which kept its schedule of the day. After me they attacked Zafar Akbar, the Chairman of Solution Movement and he was wounded. He had to be admitted in the hospital.

Why does Shiv Sena do such things? First, they want to gain cheap popularity. Second, their purpose is to instigate the people of the valley for retaliation against BJP and leaders of other political parties outside the valley. It is surprising that intellectuals and political leaders of Jammu never condemned these attacks in clear terms. This is a blot on the hospitality and democratic spirit of the people of Jammu; they would be called intolerant towards the ideas of others. I would, therefore, appeal the intellectuals, political leaders and social organizations of Jammu that they should stop tolerating unbecoming behaviour of a handful of these

extremists. They need to stand up to them in order to save the State of Jammu and Kashmir from communal clashes. It is regrettable that Jammu administration has not been able to take effective steps to curb the activities of these anti-national elements. Its inaction gives an impression that the administration is a privy to it.

Currently mainstream parties are organizing rallies and meetings. It gives an impression as if elections scheduled for October 2008 would be pre-poned for October 2007. Like past sixty years, this time also these parties are again pouring out promises and commitments to the masses of people. They are under an impression that people are not conscious of the mess they have created in the State during past half a century. They think people have forgotten their rule of corruption, coercion, oppression and nepotism. They think that by getting votes and acquiring power, they would continue with their loot for another 6 years and then see what happens because people would soon forget the promises they make.

People should take cognizance of what the previous governments failed to do. Our State has the capacity to generate 18,000 megawatts of electric power; the governments could give a revolutionary system of education that would produce professional and skilled youth instead of an army of educated unemployed people. They could not provide people clean and drinkable water, roads, medical and other civic facilities. Leave this apart, they couldn't even provide security to ordinary citizen to live a respectable life.

Nothing has been left undone to destroy the State during past sixty years. Its ecology has been polluted and unemployment is rampant to the extent that youth are driven to the brink of committing suicide. When unemployed doctors ask for jobs, they are lathi-charged. These being the story of their "achievements", these demagogic leaders brazen facedly come to the people once again asking for votes so that they are catapulted into the seats of power for another six years. They give amusing statements that usually contradict their previous ones just because they have no conviction. Therefore people must be aware of these political jugglers.

Separatists have declined participating in elections. This was correct to

some extent in the atmosphere that prevailed earlier in the State when they demanded that talks on Kashmir issue should precede elections. But what make such a dialogue difficult are the endemic dissensions within us. We are divided in several organizations. New Delhi and Islamabad exploit our disunity to their benefit. Their argument is that different organizations should unite and come to a common agenda so that a dialogue is facilitated. The people of the State agree to this ground realty. Different persons seek leadership of political groups and do not stop from opposing one another. In totality, this group-ism is harmful for the separatist movement. Inertia of sorts has gripped the movement and the gun has become the enemy of the interests of the people. Therefore it is no surprise that on international level no support for the genuine struggle of Kashmiris is forthcoming.

I can think of the example of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia while trying to find a way out of present impasse in Kashmir. Those three countries were under the control of the Soviet Union. In 1990, political opponents took part in elections and won the majority of Assembly seats. They passed a resolution demanding independence from the Soviet Union. If we unite to take part in state assembly elections, win majority of seats, and instead of going to the assembly hall, submit our resignation, it will create a big crisis and the Indian rulers will be left with no option but to begin a dialogue with us and solve the Kashmir issue. By doing so, the movement will be infused with new spirit. People have to be given the realisation that there is no inertia in the thinking and programmes of the organizations struggling for the rights of the people and their freedom. They have to be told that there are alternative methods for realising the aspirations of the people.

I would expect different organizations and leaders to think coolly on this suggestion, and not just begin to spurn it. Taking the pros and cons into consideration, a line of action has to be formulated. The organizations and leaders who depend on Pakistan should be clear in their minds that Pakistan has given us Kashmiris a clear signal. The signal is that she is not going to stake her territorial integrity at any cost. Pakistan's internal situation is so critical that she is not at all prepared to land in a position, which will create more difficulties for her on international plane. Therefore if we have to struggle for regaining our rights, whatever the nature of that

struggle, we shall have to depend on our own resources and our own plans and programmes. The people have to be our real strength and on that basis we can carry forward our movement even without foreign assistance.

For last two months there has been an interruption in the sequence of my articles.This happened because of heavy political and social engagements. The truth is that a society whose members have a vibrant conscience and sharp sensitivity and the fear of God, does not need too long sermons to make things understandable. Even a small written piece is enough to convey the meaning. I should be excused if I am blunt in saying that our society, our government and its institutions are without sensitivity and life. Administration creates hurdles for the people.

We had some expectations from the present chief minister, Mr. Azad because he has an experience of more than thirty years at the central government. But we are disappointed. He follows the same path which his predecessors walked on. Many things of public service could be done by Divisional Commissioner or Municipal Commissioner or other officers. But since they have never cared to do anything we are obliged to approach the chief minister direct. A walk down any street in the city of Srinagar will show that these are filthy with plastic bags littered everywhere choking the drains. Are the plastic bags manufacturing units run by some influential political leader of Congress, NC or PDP so that nobody dares impose a ban on the stuff?

Orders of upgrading nearly 100 schools have been issued by the government but never implemented. The ground situation is that there is neither adequate staff in these schools nor the necessary accommodation. The college going students often complain that the teaching staff is seldom seen. It is reported that the PSC conducted written tests for filling 100 posts of lecturers and professors but so far no orders for these appointments have been issued. Some lecturers and professors are engaged on contract basis to teach at various institutions but there is confusion and dispute about their emoluments. They are now forced to seek legal intervention to settle their cases. Who is responsible for pushing our educational system to this state of disaster?

The chief minister had made assertions against bribery, illegal occupation of land including those pertaining to water resources like the Dal, Nageen and Manasbal lakes etc. He had made promises of providing means of sustenance to the people and bringing prosperity to them. All these promises have proved hollow. If people expect the chief minister to bring radical changes in the administrative structure like traffic, sanitation, water supply, electricity, education etc., have they not a right to it? Should We begin to think that the chief minister has vowed not to move and not to provide any facility to the people of the State?

02July-2007

Rape, the most heinous crime

In every society in the world, rape of women is taken as the most heinous crime. In many countries of the world, while punishment for murder is two to three years imprisonment, it is anything between 10 to 14 years in the case of rape. In countries like Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Holland, a wife, if subjected to sexual intercourse by her husband against her consent, has the right to lodge a complaint with the police and file a case of rape. In India this law comes under the purview of domestic violence. However, it is a different thing that the law is not rigorously implemented.

In the sub-continent, most rape cases are not registered with the police. In the social system of these countries, a raped woman is invariably abhorred and stigmatized: the whole family stands socially humiliated and ostracized. It is difficult for a raped woman to find a life partner, something almost next to impossible.

During past eighteen years of militancy, womenfolk of Kashmir have suffered the worst oppression. The male member is the bread earner and a woman depends on him in many ways especially economically. Since a father, brother, husband or son has been killed in ongoing militancy it is the woman who becomes a victim of economic stress. The burden of their children falls on their shoulders. This resulted in forced exposure of women. The lucky ones were taken care of by their close relatives. However, even then their economic and social condition is far from satisfactory. These destitute need support so that they stand on their legs. The government should have provided them such training and work as would enable them to earn a respectable living and walk in society with their head raised high. But on official level, the widows of killed militants are looked upon with suspicion be it the question of employment or issuing of a passport or clearance.

Political and social organizations do not seem to have any specific plan and programme in this context. Our trust MNWA has so far provided training in tailoring and stitching to more than twelve thousand widows, orphans and poor girls. Many of them are now earning an honorable living independently.A probe into the Social Welfare and Anganwari programmes of government institutions will unveil horrible facts. Any training centre opened under Social Welfare Programme does not last more than a couple of months. In Anganwari, generally women get employment if they are politically influential or if they are able to grease the palms of concerned people.

Recently two soldiers attempted to rape a minor girl in Kunan Gujarpati, Bandipora. Local people mustered courage and caught hold of both of them, Kalwant Singh (Belt No. 17419879) and Gurminder Singh (Belt No. 15205987). Crowds blackened their faces and paraded them naked throughout Bandipora. It is said that the two soldiers had tried to impersonate as militants. If this is true then Indian authorities should understand that if henceforth any unknown gun wielder attempts to rape a woman, it will be attributed to the army and security forces. Most of the rape cases have been allegedly committed by soldiers or security personnel. According to police records, nearly 110 to 130 rape cases are recorded each year. In 1990, a bride name Gani was allegedly raped by the BSF personnel. Its story was on the lips of everybody. Even the aunt of the bride accompanying her was not spared. The case has been consigned to the dustbin.

On February 23, 1991, the case of collective rape in Kunan Poshpora came to light. It received wide publicity. A committee of enquiry under the headship of retired Justice Mufti Farooq reported 53 and not 110 rape victims. But what treatment was meted out to the army unit allegedly involved in the case, is little known to the public. In 1992 Human Rights Watch reported 15 cases of rape by the personnel of the forces. In 1993, Human Rights Crisis in Kashmir wrote under the heading 'Physician for Human Rights' that rapes generally takes place during crack downs and searches when males are asked to leave the home. In 1997, in a crackdown in Waroosa, seven women accused the forces of raping them. In 2004, the number of rape cases registered with the police was 124. Punishment was given in only five cases and 36 accused persons were

acquitted. In 2005, punishment was given in one case and forty were acquitted. In 2006, as many as 114 cases were reported out of which punishment was given in six cases and 45 were acquitted.

In Padra Paen , Kupwara incident of rape, Major Rahman Husain was court martial led. Although he was dismissed from service but at the same time he was acquitted of the charge of rape as well. The military court held that the under-aged girl was "abused" and her brother was threatened.

Many rape cases have taken place in the past. Nobody knows how many women have been molested. But under social pressure and also the discriminatory treatment likely to be met to the family of the raped women, the victims kept themselves back from reporting the rape and getting it registered with the police. These cases are not even reported to the public. It has to be understood that no woman would ordinarily falsely accuse anybody of rape because it is she who will be the first in her society to bear the brunt. Generally, political parties and people bring the accusation of rape to the doorsteps of the forces. They say that the Indian Army has been handling insurgency in other states like Assam, Nagaland, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Manipur. But in those operations not many cases of rape were reported against the armed forces personnel. This is despite the fact that in their societies there is less social taboo on rape cases in comparison to Muslim societies. It is alleged that Indians are intentionally using rape as a weapon of war in Jammu and Kashmir so that the morale of the people fighting for their rights is broken. It is thought that owing to the fear of humiliation thrust by society on a rape victim, people would desist from pursuing their political struggle.

Rape may be of one woman or many; it is an ugly spot on the face of entire civil society, particularly its forces, and reflects prominently in its spitefulness everywhere. The ability of a civil society to protect moral life and the role of official institutions is gauged by taking into account the occurrence of incidents of murder, arson, rape, theft, dacoity and loot in the country each year. Indian authorities should understand that the impact of a heinous crime like rape is not effaced for generations notwithstanding the fact that it is an aberration on the part an individual

from among the troops. It brings defamation to entire armed forces and the country. I could even go to the length of saying that the soul of Gandhi ji will be uneasy on finding that his countrymen indulge in such inhuman crimes.

Therefore what should be done is that the Armed Forces Special Act, which gives many powers and impunity to the forces, is immediately withdrawn. Army should be pulled back from villages and sent to the barracks; during searches and crackdowns not only the local police but respectable elders of the locality should also be included in the team of searchers. Those affected by rape should be helped in their rehabilitation and they should be able to stand on their legs.

As far as political parties and social organizations of this society are concerned, they bring out large rallies and make fulsome demonstrations when a rape case is brought to the notice. But we would like to impress upon them that the happening has not to be taken as the crime or fault of the victim. As respectable and responsible persons and in following the religious dictates, they should come forward to lend help to the helpless women. We must prove to the whole world that we are a living nation and want to live with dignity. We shall prove the instinct of humanism in ourselves.

Rape cases attributed to unidentified gun wielders have not been registered so far. We have been told that unidentified gunmen have not only sexually exploited women on a large scale in these areas but have also kept women with them as sex symbol. It will be incongruity on our part, if we turn a blind eye to the incidents of rape in these cases while we raise great hue and cry against the heinous crime of rape committed by forces in one part of our Sate. We cannot throw a cover on vicious and shameful acts of unidentified gunmen with who above mentioned remote areas are infested. This nation is abused and humiliated day in and day out. Let us be precise.

At check post and security posts set up after every few steps, vehicles, cars and motorcycles are stopped and riders are asked to come out. They are treated badly be it a male or a female. People travelling in public transport are given a raw deal. When the chief minister or any other

minister is supposed to pass by, the pedestrians are held almost at siege for hours. I have myself been a victim of this nasty treatment. My car was stopped by security personnel of the Chief Minister while passing along the Boulevard. They behaved in a discourteous manner, thumped at my car to stop me although my security man in uniform sat by my side. It was not before another forty-five minutes that the caravan of the chief minister passed by. In third Round Table Conference, Omar Abdullah complained to the Prime Minister that once he was going somewhere along with his black cat security men when troops stopped him and blocked his way by placing a two-and a half ton vehicle in front of his car. He said that his security had been detained for half an hour.

It has to be said that the state police force has more often than not made the state law an instrument of oppression against the poor and helpless people. FIRs against people are lodged on the basis of influence one wields with the police station. Respectable persons are humiliated. Let me cite one more of my experiences in this connection. A plot of 12 kanals of Custodian land was allotted illegally to a person in Ishber, Nishat on extraction of a bribe. Young boys in the locality used to play on this ground and they protested against the allotment and did not allow its possession. As a result of pressure built by the local population and our incessant correspondence with the office of the chief minister, this allotment was quashed. The government issued orders of handing over the land to the Sports Council for converting it into a playing ground. I paid a donation of three lakh rupees to the Sports Council for this purpose. I had made this offer in the High Court too. But what actually happened was that a case of fomenting disorder against me and 11 youth of the locality was framed. We were alleged to have stolen three galvanized tin sheets. Obviously, the case was registered by bribing the police authorities. Prosecution continues in the court of law.

This is not the only case in sight. There are thousands of fake cases framed against innocent people. One rarely gets justice in a court of law in the State, and if at all it comes, it comes so late as to lose its meaning. By that time, a poor man is reduced to penury. Despite obtaining quashing of cases under PSA from the High Court, the youth are re-arrested and re-framed under the same process. It is tantamount to contempt of the High Court. This is how the administration has virtually

paralysed judiciary.

But I must admit that notwithstanding what is said in foregone lines, we have many honest and justice loving officers in the police service of the State. They perform their duty with great dedication. But when the whole system is corrupt, a few honest people cannot do much damage stopping. We are told that stolen cars are got released through back door manipulation. The grapevine has it that some mainstream politicians and police officers are partners in these deals. Stolen cars are even made available for personal use.

Transport system, hospital administration and functioning of educational institutions have almost broken down completely in this State. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed youth are dragging a miserable life. The government neither sets up any industries nor draws plans for opening employment opportunities for the youth. People of the State purchase meat worth 1300 crores of rupees annually from other states and enjoy eating it to their full. We have numerous grazing fields spread over the entire State, and we could develop sheep industry to the extent of making it capable of exporting meat to other states. This would provide means of livelihood for thousands of our youth. Our water resources are shrinking fast because of acute pollution. When we motor from Dal Gate to Hazratbal, the air is stinking and obnoxious. Such is the level of pollution of Dal Lake. The question before the State government, intelligentsia and people with conscience is this: what will happen to the present and the future generations of Kashmir?

As misrule, corruption and oppression are rampant, why should the masses of India, her intellectuals, media persons, politicians and conscientious civil society, remain silent, nay tight lipped, when we Kashmiris are called terrorists and Pakistani agents? In the murder case of Jessica Lal, the conscience of the entire nation was stirred. Why it is dormant in the case of thousands of Jessica Lal's of Kashmir? What is the meaning of the whole of India maintaining silence over the excesses and oppression perpetrated on Kashmiris? When the people of India worship Sita, why should their offspring commit rape of Kashmiri women?

09July-2007

From Ka'aba to Lal Masjid

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his lieutenants have repeatedly asserted that places of worship can be used as sanctuaries in times of war. It means that life and honour of those who seek shelter in worshipping places have to be warranted. It has been seen that during war ordinary people seek shelter in churches, mosques, temples and synagogues. No conqueror, warrior, king or military general violates the life and honour of the inmates of worshipping places. The Prophet (PBUH) or his lieutenants have impressed that a worshipping place is not to be damaged. In addition, they have directed that the lives of old people, women, children and surrendering youth should be spared.

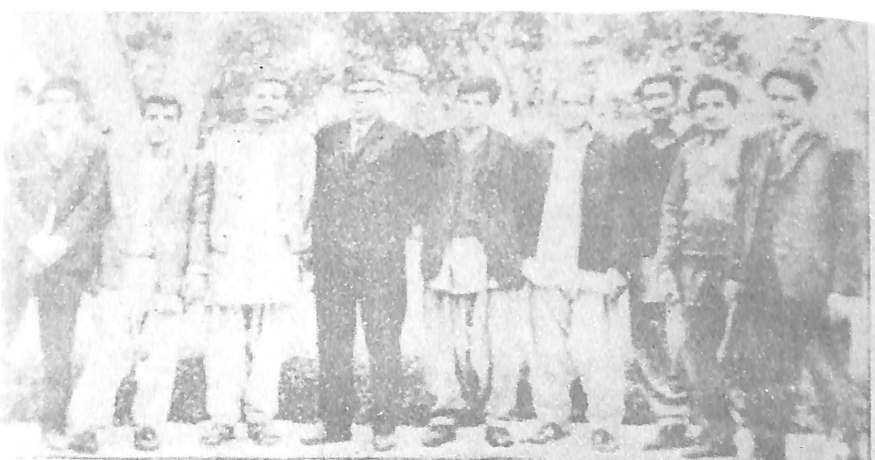
Worshipping places are meant for worship. If some soldiers or armed groups entrench themselves at a certain place with the purpose of fighting, then that place is called a bunker or war front. If gun carrying groups enter a worshipping place with the purpose of launching an attack on the army of that country, then that place no more remains a worshipping place; it becomes a bunker and war front. The government has the moral and legal justification to throw the gunmen out from that place. But if unarmed people take shelter in these worshipping places then attacking them is forbidden by religion, law and morality. It will be a crime of grievous nature. Recently there was fighting in the Lal Masjid of Islamabad. We shall try to make a historical analysis of this event.

During the Caliphate of Abdul Malik bin Marwan, Abdallah bin Zubayr staked his claim for Caliphate as he had been governing a number of Islamic countries for nine years. The Syrian army commanded by Hajjaj bin Yousuf marched towards Mecca to engage Abdallah bin Zubayr who took shelter in Ka'aba. In order to draw him out from there, Hajjaj bin Yousuf ordered pelting of stones and earthen containers of fire on Ka'aba. This caused slight damage to the House of God. Scholars differ in their opinion on this historical event. But the ulema and scholars are



Shaheed Maqbool Butt's

Potrait was made by Salimi artist in Sailkot,
I gave the Idea of making this potrait.
I and late Majeed Amjad Butt made this potrait possible in 1982.



دائیں سے بائیں گنگا کیس کے ملزمان میر عبدالمنان، ہاشم قریشی، مقبول بٹ شہید، شہید عبدالقیوم، اشرف قریشی اور جی ایم لون اپنے ساتھیوں غلام احمد بٹ اور نسیم لون کے
فروری 1972ء میں لاہور ہائی کورٹ کے باہر

From LeftMir Ab.Manan,Hashim Qureshi,Maqbool Butt,Mir.Ab.Qayum,Ashraf Qureshi,and G.M.Lone



Wamiq Farooq (Shaheed)
was killed by Police Officer with Teargas Shell,
Direct hit in Wamiq's head at Nowhatta Srinagar

unanimous in stating that according to the Qur'an and hadith (tradition), Ka'aba is the sanctum sanctorum so much so that even a bird flying over is not allowed to be shot at. But when a person or a group of persons or an army contingent seeks shelter in Mecca or any other worshipping place and begins to attack the adversary with arms, then the government of the day is justified to throw them out. Such incidents have happened in the course of history.

In 1990 during the reign of Shah Khalid, the Saudi troops undertook an operation to throw out armed foreign gunmen who had seized the sanctum sanctorum. Nearly 200 of them were killed and the entire holy shrine was splashed with blood stains. The TV telecast it live. In 1984, Bhindranwale, the Akali leader in whose creation Congress party had a role, raised the banner of rebellion and turned the Golden Temple into a battle ground. The Indian army launched an attack on the temple, and the Sikh Regiment also took part in that operation. True that Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India had to pay the price with her life. In the aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination, a massacre of the Sikhs took place in Delhi. It remains a black mark in the history of India.

Many incidents of this type took place in our State during past eighteen years of militancy. Militants turned worshipping places into strongholds to fight the Indian army. In Hazratbal siege, forty Kashmiri youth fell in the fighting. In Chrar Sharief, Mast Gul besieged the shrine with the result that in counter action, all structures of the shrine were razed to ground. Political leadership of the State ran riot with emotion and made frenzied demonstrations. In other words they approved the entry of gun wielding persons into the shrine. It is true that militants tried to use worshipping places and shrines for fighting purposes.

It is interesting to recount that when militants attacked Raghunath Temple in Jammu, the Pakistani establishment and media attributed it as reaction to Indian security forces desecrating the religious places of Muslims. But when religious extremists captured the Lal Masjid and Jamia' Hafsa in Islamabad for their political purpose, Pakistani army had no alternative but to launch an operation to throw them out. For six months prior to the operation, the male and female students of Lal Masjid seminary had been indulging in vandalism in the town. They attacked the Children's Library

and took the Chinese workers hostages. The Government of Pakistan showed exemplary patience to resolve the issue through talks. During nine days of siege, the Muslim League leader Chowdhury Shujaat Husain, the most respected and elderly citizen Abdul Sattar Eidi, Imam Ka'aba and the parliamentarians of Pakistan's religious groups, both men and women, tried hard to resolve the issue through peaceful negotiations. Unfortunately this did not succeed. A Colonel of Pakistani SOG was fired at from inside the mosque and got killed (who will be called a martyr when on both sides Muslims get killed). At this point Pakistani Amy had to launch an attack on Lal Masjid. Hundreds of boy and girl students were killed in the fighting. Events like these tarnish the image of the Muslims all over the world. They are hated.

Confusion has overtaken the new generation of Muslims. According to Qur'an and Sunna Islam is a religion of peace. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has emphatically said not once but thrice that one who harms a neighbour or becomes the cause of his discomfiture is not from among us; he is hellish. This hadith does not necessarily stipulate that the neighbour should be a Muslim. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said that one who kills an innocent person, verily he kills the mankind: one who saves the life of a man; verily he saves the entire mankind.

I am neither a cleric nor a scholar. But I have always evinced keen interest in the history of Islam. I have come to the conclusion that great and eminent scholars and theologians have emerged from the Islamic seminaries such as Imam Shafi'i, Imam Ghazali, Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Maliki. Entire Islamic world follows their theological schools. Apart from them, there were others such as Hassan Basri, Habib Ajami, Zeyd bin Aslam, Abdallh bin Ibi Bakr ibn Hazm, Abdul Malik bin Yahya, Shoeb ibn Ibi Zeyb, Sufiyan Thauri, Ibrahim bin Adham, Ismael bin Allayeh, Shafiq Balakhi, Abdallah bin Kathir Muqir, Abdallah bin Wahhab and Imam Sheybai. Thus Islamic seminaries have always enriched Islamic civilization by producing most eminent scholars in order to interpret religion. We never come across incidents in the past that Imams used seminaries or mosques for military purposes or for turning them into camps for imparting training in arms. If that had been the case then today we would not have a single scholar or Imam to interpret religion. Islamic scholars, ulema, managers of big Islamic seminaries, and Islamic

governments shall have to answer a serious question. Should Islamic seminaries be allowed to transform into jihadi centres for combating opponents and fulfilling political objectives? Or should these be put on real Islamic footing so as to produce such theologians and Imams as would introduce the spirit of true Islam to the whole world? Creating jihadi forces in the seminaries to fight the enemy would result in situations like Lal Masjid. Four bomb blasts have occurred ever since in different parts of Pakistan to avenge the military action in Lal Masjid. More than 60 Pakistani soldiers and 40 civilians have perished in these blasts. Hundreds of young men and women are left wounded.

This is the result of America's policy of sponsoring jihad against Russia in Afghan war only to avenge her debacle in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. For this purpose they made Pakistan a camp for operations. In the process, Pakistani religious seminaries became manufacturing units of jihadi forces. Later governments in Pakistan deployed these forces in another jihad against India. It was the US, which put the Afghan manpower and resources to use against Russia and succeeded in achieving its political objective of breaking the Soviet Union. Today the same US, using the resources of the Muslims, are busy in converting these seminaries into modern schools. Thus Islamic states have been protecting American interests in the past and at present.

The right thing to do is that in these seminaries, students should be provided with modern curricula. Computer is a must in this age so that they can study other religions too. In this way a comparative study would be handy to induct reasoning in the propagation of Islam. Much more responsibility devolves on the shoulders of ulema today than in the epoch when the perfidy of calling the Qur'an "the book of Godless people" was spread in the Islamic world. Today all over the world, Muslims are labelled as terrorists. Though the word Islam literally means peace yet we see that wherever and whenever an incident of terrorist attack or suicide attack takes place, Muslims are involved in them. Therefore the ulema must rise to the occasion and present the true spirit of Islam to the world.

There is one more question for the ulema in Pakistan and the rest of the world. The Saudi government used brute force to end the seizure of the holy shrine by the gun-wielding youth in 1990s. Nobody then opposed

Saudi operation, rather everybody appreciated it. Why then is so much of hue and cry raised on throwing out the gunmen from Lal Masjid and Jami'a Hafsa? Muslims should forget their differences, and unanimously reject the policy of making seminaries as jihadi manufacturing factories. Pakistan or other Islamic states should desist from using their seminaries and religious students against their political opponents or other countries in the name of jihad. Afghan jihad has brought the legacy of drugs and Kalashnikov to Pakistani youth. Creating jihadi force in seminaries and mosques will only replicate incidents like those of Lal Masjid.

23July-2007

Exodus of Bihari laborers and repercussions

Hundreds of thousands of tourists visit J&K State every year to enjoy its exquisite scenic beauty. A large number of beggars and criminals from outside the state also pour in. In addition, we have non-state labourers and daily wagers from Punjab, Bengal, and Bihar and UP coming to the State for manual work.

These labourers are of much importance to the economy of the State. The good thing about them is that they do not hesitate to do odd jobs, whereas Kashmiris would not do manual labour like a mason or a carpenter. Thousands of young people agree to become employees with just 1500 rupees income per month whereas they could easily earn to the tune of 4,500 per month if they worked as a mason or a skilled labourer. Consequently, non State subject labourers and artisans from outside the State have established themselves in almost all walks of life. We can find them engaged in building houses, constructing roads, reaping crops, working on farms and kilns, laying bricks, doing wood work and etc.

It may be said that the presence of this large labour class from outside the State could increase unemployment among the local population. True, but the fault lies with us. If we encourage and give priority to local workers and skilled hands, outsiders would not be able to stay on for too long a time. The outsiders have organized contractors who arrange regular supply of labour force available with them. If local labourers and skilled workers too had such organized job centers where the skilled and non skilled labourers would be enlisted, the situation would be far batter.

As far as the case of beggars and criminals is concerned, we have an anti-begging law, and one who indulges in begging could be punished under its provision. But here in the State, we find the localities of beggars

come up right and left. It is said that these settlements are also the dens of crime. We are also told that some police functionaries receive weekly doles (bribes/hafta) from these beggars. Otherwise how it possible is that a beggar is roaming about and begging under the very eye of the policemen? Why do not the police maintain a record of non-state subject criminals along with their photographs for identification? With this record in hand, the police can stop the in-coming beggars at Lakhanpur --- the entry point ---- and send them back to places wherefrom they come. Further, non-state subject labourers who want to come to the State for doing labour could be asked to obtain a work permit against a very small fee at Lakhanpur. When a Kashmiri labourer goes to a place of work outside the State territory, he carries with him a certificate from his police station indicating that his name has been entered in the register of migrant labourers. This is taken as an identity card when the holder travels for work or business. If something untoward happens, its information is conveyed to the concerned office at home. In the same way, a proper record of non-state subject migrant labourers coming for work to the State should be maintained by police functionaries.

Some days ago, an innocent girl named Tabandeh was molested and then murdered by two local youth in collusion with two non-State subject youth in Langet. A wave of anger and resentment swept the entire State. It was natural reaction to the heinous crime. We are told that it is worthwhile to save an innocent person even if ninety-nine sinners are to be freed in exchange. As a nation let us do some introspection. We have asked thousands of non-state subjects (labourers) to leave the State immediately because "they are criminals and are involving Kashmiri youth into committing crimes." This statement has been issued by no less a person than Sayed Ali Shah Geelani who claims to be knowledgeable about Islamic studies and propagation of Islam. Militant organizations like Hizb Lashkar and Jaysh-e Muhammad welcomed Geelani's ultimatum. This sent a wave of fear and alarm to the non-state subjects throughout the valley. Many of them began to leave in haste. Exploiting the state of harassment of these poor labourers, the bus and wagon owners plying between Srinagar and Jammu, charged exorbitant fare of 600 to 1000 rupees per head. This is another aspect of our moral degradation. It was repetition of the scene of 1990 when the Pandit community left the valley out of fear and consternation.

In which country or community do we find that an entire community is punished for a sin or a crime committed by one or its members? During past 18 years, a large number of bomb blasts have occurred in different places in India, and Kashmiris were involved in some of them. A blast took place in a passenger bus in Lajpat Nagar in 1995-96, which took a toll of 20 innocent lives. Attacks were made on Parliament House, Red Fort or in various bazaars of Delhi. Many innocent people perished in these blasts. These caused shock and anger among people all over the world including those in Kashmir. The dead bodies of Amarnath pilgrims who were gunned down by militants were sent to their native places in Bengal and Gujarat. The masses of India demonstrated great patience and forbearance, and nothing happened that would endanger the lives, families or properties of thousands of Kashmiris in various parts of India. Although these Kashmiris and her family members were scared by what had happened in Kashmir, yet the credit goes to the people, the common men and women of India who did not lose their cool. It has also to be conceded that despite these big incidents taking place, Hindu extremist organizations in India did not issue anything like an ultimatum to the Kashmiris or to a hundred and fifty thousand Kashmiri students studying in different colleges and universities of India. The main reason is that the people of India are nationalists. They know that behaving irresponsibly would result in large scale riots and that would bring defamation to their country.

Geelani Sahib issued the ultimatum and militant organizations endorsed it forthwith. But within two days, Geelani came out with a modification of his earlier statement. He said that the rights of non-state subjects should not be denied and the interference of militant organizations is uncalled for as it is a social issue and can be resolved through mutual talk and understanding. As such no dead line has to be drawn. He added that Hizb did not issue any threatening to outsiders to leave and the wrong doing of a few persons should not mean punishing thousands.

The fact is that the local spokesman of the Hizb did issue a warning to the non-state subjects to leave Kashmir. It appears that soon after they issued the ultimatum, both, Geelani and the Hizb realised that its repercussions could result in extirpation of thousands of Kashmiris who were spread all over India in connection with their livelihood or business.

If these people were to be thrown out in retaliation to Geelani's ultimatum, it would mean not only loss of billions of rupees of trade and properties to Kashmiris but also opening a prospect of destitution for them. Hundreds of thousands of students studying in Indian colleges and universities will have to cut short their educational career, which means spoliation of their precious lives. This would mean increasing the unemployment graph in Kashmir. These stark repercussions forced the ultimatum givers to retrace their steps. But it was too late. Thousands of labourers had begun to leave Kashmir. Criminals and contractors who owed the wage money to the non-state labourers began to intimidate them and grabbed their hard earned money.

Geelani's revised statement had no impact. As I pen down this piece, non-state subject labourers are bee lining in front of buses and wagons to ferry them to Jammu. With the exodus of non-state labour force, work on many constructional and developmental projects has come to a halt. Will Kashmiri labourers come forward to complete the unfinished task? It is not good to issue ultimatum and soon after withdraw or modify it. In any case it is harmful to the interests of Kashmiri people.

If an entire society or religious group is to be punished for the sins of its one individual, the world shall land in a situation of complete chaos. Recently, a Kashmiri youth lured in Delhi a girl from different religion and brought her to Kashmir. Nobody in Delhi said that Kashmiris were criminals and should be turned out of Delhi. A Sikh raped and then murdered a British teen-aged girl and then escaped to India. The British government did not issue an ultimatum to Indian residents in UK to leave that country. The law took its course and the victim was done justice in accordance with the law of the land.

Geelani and the Hizb activists are anti-India in the eyes of the Indians. But the Indian people or government never punished Geelani's or Salahu'd-Din's sons. They are doing government jobs. When Iftikhar Geelani was implicated in some false cases, a large number of Indian intellectuals and common people came out on streets in his defence. They also raised their voice in defence of Afzal Guru.

Keeping these facts in view, we should handle issues with patience and

considerateness. We should not do something that makes Indian masses our enemy and brings us defamation throughout the world. Only the culprits have to be punished. We appeal to the public to keep an eye on criminal elements who want to exploit the situation in their interests and claim that they are "the sons of the soil". We also appeal the DGP that a campaign against begging should be launched in the State. The habitats of all non-state beggars should be demolished immediately and they be thrown out because generally many of them are responsible for small crimes. We know that if the police mean business, it can clear the State of their presence in two days, and catch the criminals. Non-State residents are also advised to identify the criminals living around their habitats. We want that our society should be without unwanted elements and we also want them earning their bread with honour and through honest labour.

06 Aug-2007

A thief is a thief whatever his religion

Finance Minister of the Coalition government, Mr. Qarra, has accused J&K Vigilance of harassing the people of Kashmir by acting only against the officials in the valley. Vigilance is an autonomous department of the State Government. The proper place where he should have given vent to his complaint was the cabinet and not in public. Such statements tend to flare up regional prejudices. Moreover, communal elements find an excuse for fanning the flames of communalism and thus damage good relations between people of different faith. Statements like these have the potential of creating rivalry and even clashes between the employees of various regions in the government structure. Officials from the regions of Jammu and Srinagar can become non-cooperative to the detriment of common people.

Mangat Ram Sharma, the Minister for Health, repudiated Finance Minister's assertions. This point counter point attitude only widens the gulf between bureaucrats of respective regions. For last five years there are dissensions within the coalition government; these have adversely affected the pace and activities of development of the State. During the period when the Mufti was at the helm of affairs, Congress ministers would make contradicting statements in the hope of gaining political mileage over their rivals. Now the reverse is the case... Both have at least one common programme and that is making a fool of the unsuspecting people of the State.

My probing into the Vigilance issue revealed that its laws have many loopholes, and anybody with a big corruption case against him can find an escape route without much ado. A sort of seek and hide game goes on between the Vigilance and those alleged to be accepting bribes. Any amount of money, property, house and land confiscated by the Vigilance

can be got released on bail. Thereafter begins the complex judicial process, of lawyers, documents, and witnesses. After years of hearing, a decision does not come forth... And at the end of the day, in most cases, the accused person is acquitted.

Dal Lake project is a major source of corruption today. Raising a building or a hotel and felling trees in the lake area is strictly prohibited under law. Yet, despite LAWDA, one is surprised to find huge constructions in concrete raised in Dal area. These buildings or hotels are provided electricity, water and telephone facilities by the state government. A case was registered against the former Chairman of LAWDA. But as usual, nothing happened. A few days back the Vigilance grabbed a patwari in Kramshorah, Budgam. The case receivea enormous media hype. Now the patwari has been set free and his property is restored to him. Vigilance raided the house of an employee of LAWDA and arrested him on charges of possessing property disproportionate to his income. He has been set free on bail and reinstated in his post.

A thief is a thief, whatever his religion. A person, whom society has given a responsible position in order to work for the good of people, but turns to be corrupt, is a bigger thief than the one who steals things in a private house. The statement of Qarra Sahib suggests that before catching a thief we should find out to which faith or region he belongs. This cannot work; it will lead to the disintegration of social fabric. Any person proved to be taking bribes, should be punished under law. He should not escape accountability otherwise the entire system of justice will crumble. If this is not possible, then at least there should not be any publicity in the media about any scam being unearthed until the court passes a verdict. By publicising the case, innocent persons are humiliated and defamed.

A probe into the differences between the Vigilance and the Cabinet has brought startling things to light. Vigilance conducts enquiry in two types of cases; non-trap and trap. Non-trap cases are those into which Vigilance conducts enquiry by itself, obtains proofs, arrests the accused, and files cases against them. At the moment, Vigilance is working on 100 non-trap cases of which 54 are in Kashmir Division and 46 in Jammu Division. In regard to trap cases, complaints are lodged by the people. They mention the names of officials who demand bribes from people. The Vigilance

gives them marked currency notes which are given in bribe to the corrupt officials and then the Vigilance catches them red handed. So far 112 such cases have come to the notice of the Vigilance. Out of this, 89 were reported from the valley and the remaining 23 from Jammu Division. If there is numerical difference in the cases from two divisions, this is not the creation of Vigilance. It is because from Kashmir 89 persons lodged complaints and from Jammu only 23 persons complained. The question is who is responsible for these cases, Vigilance or the people who suffer at the hands of corrupt officials?

We have some more data with us. 143 officials are reported involved in cases of bribery. Out of them there is one former Chief Secretary, 7 IAS officers, one IPS, 7 Heads of Department and 6 Chief Engineers. A fascinating case is of Director Health Services. In 1998, he gave the contract of supplying Ampicillin capsules. First, second and the third contractor quoted rupees 1400 for 1000 capsules. But the said officer approved the supply from a fourth contractor at the rate of 1600 rupees per thousand capsules.

An enquiry was made when a complaint was brought to the notice of the Vigilance. The Director Health said that the stuff offered by the first three contractors was sub-standard and hence rejected them. But capsules quoted at rupees 1400 were already being supplied at Lal Ded and SMHS hospitals. There was no complaint against those. The laboratory report said that the capsules costing 1600 rupees per one thousand were below the standard of those costing 1400 rupees per thousand. The Health Department suffered a loss of 5 lakh rupees in this transaction. The Vigilance Department wanted to take proper action against the Director of Health Department but was prevented by the government on the plea that the said department would institute a departmental enquiry. Thus on the recommendation of the same Director Health a committee comprising three doctors, all his subordinates, was constituted to do the job. Their report said that the Director Health had no intention of taking any bribe in the bargain. As regards the loss to the state exchequer, the department submitted its explanation to the government in October 2006 but till this day ---- 16 August, 2007 ---- the Vigilance had not received the reply.

It gives no satisfaction to say that the government has set up a

department to catch the thieves in its administrative structure. What is needed is a system in which once an official is caught with marked currency notes taken by him as bribe, he should be arrested there and then and brought to the book forthwith. The property, which he has raised in the name of his wards, should be confiscated.

There is no clear proof needed than catching a corrupt person red handed accepting the bribe. The Vigilance should pay more attention to non-trap cases instead of trap cases. The Vigilance knows the salary plus TA/DA and other perks of all government employees from a chief minister down to his peon. But the fact is that those involved in cases of bribery are generally the senior officers. It is not difficult for the Vigilance to make an estimate of income and expenditure of a government employee. Having computed that, it can go a step further and find out how much property has an official raised in the name of his close relatives or what is his bank balance and in whose name? It can easily be found out whether the property raised is inherited from his ancestors or not.

This is the system of catching the corrupt people in Europe and the US. Money illegally raised is usually utilised in purchasing landed property because government's policy in regard to sale/ purchase of land is defective and one that increases the prospect of bribery. The rate of court fee for purchasing land in urban areas is 22,000 rupees per kanal. In rural areas it is 7,000 rupees or less. People purchase land which costs anything between 20 to 50 lakhs a kanal. But when documents are made in the court, its cost is show just 2 or 3 lak rupees a kanal to reduce the court fee.

For example, a man purchased land worth 40 lakhs a kanal but in documents showed it just 2 lakh rupees a kanal. He has thus changed 38 lakhs from black money to white money and at the same time he has caused loss of laks of rupees to the public exchequer. If the government imposes court fee not on the cost of land but on the land itself, it would plug the damage caused to the public exchequer. For example if the cost of land in Haiderpora and Nishat is 30 lak rupees a kanal, the government can impose a court fee of 3 lak rupees per kanal. This will prevent the customer from fixing the cost of land according to his choice... If he purchases 10 kanals of land, he has to account for the money he paid for

it. Furthermore the public exchequer will not have to suffer any monetary loss.

We have the example of the properties of Pandits before us. The cost of land was assessed according to location/site. The state exchequer benefited from increased court fee and the Pandits did not suffer on account of distress sales. Then in the case of buildings, any amount can be invested. The government should not throw the vigilance net only on its employees; political leaders, bureaucrats, ministers and bigwigs should all be brought in the net. People must show their moveable and immoveable properties in a prescribed return. There should be proper accountability for the properties raised, its sources and means.

There is annual house and land tax, which owners have to pay to the government in foreign countries. This money is used for construction of roads and developmental works and sanitation in the towns. Residential accommodation for the homeless can be created from the property tax. The gap between the rich and the poor has to be bridged. We have seen that in western countries, nonpayment of property tax results in the confiscation of property. Therefore no body evades paying annual tax. In our country, payment of tax is evaded. The governments, previous as well as present, both have done little to control corruption. When Azad assumed power, he announced war on corruption. It remained a hollow slogan.

My information is that when he came to power, nearly 300 files were pending. His ministers and bureaucrats scared him saying if these were disposed off, chaos would overtake the whole administrative system. His government could not take any action against the corrupt people. How disturbing that people prefer to give bribes rather than come forward to identify the persons who ask for bribes. In government offices, even for finalising a genuine case one has to grease the palms of concerned officials. The reason why people do not come out in large numbers to report the bribery cases is that even after identifying a corrupt person and framing of a case against him and publicising the event, no action is taken or the convicted are often acquitted. Therefore people have lost faith in accountability process. The accused are reinstated in their posts, even promoted getting back the arrears of payment in full.

Therefore, it is important that anti-corruption laws are modified in a way that a corrupt person has no chance of escaping punishment. Those from among the public on whose complaint a corrupt official is caught taking a bribe, should receive ten per cent of the confiscated property as reward for their social service. But it has to be ensured that this law is not misused for personal vendetta or political differences. It would be better if a tribunal comprising three judges of the High Court is constituted before which persons alleged of taking bribes could appeal. The tribunal should have a maximum period of three months to dispose off a case.

20Aug-2007

Nawaz Sharief's return And deportment: nuances and mechanisms:

Prompted by Supreme Court's verdict, Nawaz Sharief decided to return home after spending seven years in exile. Apparently, he had not made a serious analysis of ground situation in Pakistan. In fact, the verdict of the Supreme Court left little choice for him. His decision not to return would have put the Muslim League (N) in an embarrassing situation. While returning to Pakistan, he seems not to have kept in sight the role of Saudi Arabia and the US. The two countries, especially the US, were not in favour of his return home. Saudis tagged on to the Americans. The US has been keen to forge an agreement between Musharraf and Benazir as it intends intensifying war against terrorism. Knowledgeable circles say that a deal has almost been struck between Benazir and General Musharraf. But, they say, that a faction of ruling Muslim League led by Chowdhury Shuja'at Husain & Co is creating big hurdles in the finalization of the deal. Even some party leaders within the PPP like Aetizaz Hussain and others are also against the deal.

After the reinstatement of the Chief Justice Chowdhury Iftikhar, General Pervez Musharraf's position weakened to some extent. Then Lal Masjid operation incident took place, which, by and large, people did not approve. They thought it was conducted to please the American masters. The people of Pakistan have always been against the US and its policy. However, they are helpless. When Z.A. Bhutto opened a front against the Americans and talked of carrying millions of his compatriots with him, the Americans used Pakistani Army to send him to the gallows. This, according to Henry Kissinger, came as a big shock to the world. Through General Zia, the US made Pakistan a base camp for ten years against Soviet Union. Thus during 13 years of General Zia's military regime, the movement for democracy in Pakistan could not make any progress.
As in the case of General Zia, the destiny of General Pervez Musharraf also met with a quirk when the US used Pakistan and Pakistani Army

against terrorism. In a coup of 1999, General Musharraf ousted Nawaz Sharief and grabbed power in Pakistan. Very soon the anti-US campaign of Al Qaeda and Taliban gained momentum culminating in 9/11 attacks. With this development, the US lost no time in turning Pakistan Army into frontline resistance force against Al Qaeda and Taliban because both organizations were the creation of CIA and ISI. Thus under the leadership of General Musharraf, Pakistan Army became the necessity of the United States. In order to stall Nawaz Sharief's man oeuvres against General Musharraf, the US administration immediately dispatched Assistant Secretary Richard Boucher to Islamabad followed by Prince Muqarran, the chief of Saudi intelligence and his companion Sa'ad Hariri, the son of former Lebanese Prime Minister. They met with General Musharraf and then entreated Nawaz Sharief to honour his ten year deal of staying away from Pakistan. In this way, sending Nawaz Sharief in exile once again is the sequel to a unanimous decision of the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. It should be noted that Saudi aids who had come to Islamabad along with Prince Muqarran accompanied Nawaz Sharief in the same plane which carried him to Jeddah. They were waiting in Pakistan to take him back to Saudi Arabia.

One of the aims of the US in deporting Nawaz Sharief back to Saudi Arabia was to ensure that the activists of his organization's partners like Jama'at-e Islami and Jami'at-e Ulema-e Islam or All Party Democratic Movement (APDM) were stopped from coming on the streets to give a rousing reception to Nawaz Sharief. It is said that these parties are financed by the Saudis. If after Saudi support to General Musharraf was known, these parties managed to come on the streets and demonstrate their support to Nawaz Sharief, then the Saudis would stop financing them. That is why these parties did not give expression to any reaction, emotion and zeal when Nawaz Sharief was sent back. At the same time, the military government ordered arrests of pro-Nawaz activists on a large scale, imposed Section 144 and closed all Pakistani airports. All roads leading to Islamabad Airport were sealed and the public was never allowed to come anywhere close to Nawaz Sharief. Since the decision of sending Nawaz Sharief back to Saudi Arabia had been taken three or four days in advance, the administration had all the time at its disposal to make full arrangement secretly so much so that even the Attorney General of Pakistan, too, was kept uninformed of the decision.

- Two things could have happened after the deportment of Nawaz Sharief. One is that the Supreme Court had decreed that Nawaz Sharief had the right to return and if there was a case against him it could be brought before the court of law. He had a right to live in Pakistan. The government acted against the spirit of this verdict of the Supreme Court and deported Nawaz Sharief. Obviously the case of his deportment will be heard by the Supreme Court. It is difficult to presume what the decision of the Supreme Court can be. Supposing that the verdict is delivered against the action of the government, the question is who will implement it? General Musharraf's regime has come to power through the use of force, and by violating constitution and the law. It has survived seven years of its existence only because of force. Why should it care for any verdict against it?

Nevertheless, the resolve of Nawaz Sharief to return home raised his stature among the people and particularly in Punjab: his popularity has increased manifold. This is definitely going to prove of much benefit to his party in next elections if those are fair. Probably, it will have damaging impact on contemplated Musharraf-Bhutto deal. People are against General Musharraf because of his camaraderie with the US. The impending Musharraf-Benazir deal is interpreted as safeguarding American interests, giving support to Musharraf and forming a united front against Pakistani religious extremist groups. Now in addition, the deal will also be taken as a measure against Nawaz Sharief. The net result will be that Pakistan will be exposed to further instability in days to come. Official Muslim League and Benazir will never be able to pull together. Nawaz Sharief will be taken a symbol against the political parties lending support to the military regime. It is evident that the absence of Nawaz Sharief from the scene and imposition of a ban on his political activities in Saudi Arabia are detrimental to his party. It, therefore, depends on the leaders of Muslim League (N) how active they keep the party in the absence of its founding father. One can hope that under the able leadership of men like Javed Hashmi, the party will maintain its zeal and zest of political activism.

There is one more development that may be another feather in the cap of Nawaz Sharief's party. Some dissenting senior members of Benazir's PPP have given an indication that they might quit the party and join

Nawaz Sharief's Muslim League (N). Included among them are some who had not left the PPP even during the coercive period of Zia's regime. Famous jurist Aetizaz Hassan tops that list. Thus we have an indication of the mood of the people and also the turn of events in contemporary Pakistan. It is said of General Zia that he would sit at his table with his military uniform on and write a letter to the President of Pakistan saying that in the interests of the country and the nation, his tenure as Chief of Army be extended. Then taking off his uniform, he would wear civilian clothes and go to the Presidential House and formally dispose of his own application. He continued to be the Army Chief and the President for 13 years.

General Musharraf has been following suit but his position as President is not secure. If religious parties and PPP do not endorse the office of the President in the current parliament, it could lead to constitutional crisis in Pakistan... Martial law could be imposed on the country. It is a different question whether the conditions in Pakistan can be controlled by imposing martial law because Pakistani army is not only attacked on the frontier its armed personnel are also kidnapped in hundreds.

People and leaders in Kashmir should remember that neither the US nor UK expressed any reaction on the deportment of Nawaz Sharief. The EU issued a casual statement saying that if there was any case against Nawaz Sharief, he should have been prosecuted. Out of emotion, we nurse many expectations from the US and UK although we know it fully well that they care only for their national interests. They characterise a movement in any country as democratic autocratic as it suits their national interests. Because the US needs General Musharraf for its interests, they attach no value to the democratic steps taken by Nawaz Sharief; actually they were against him.

I was surprised to find that a person who ran the office of prime minister twice was held by his collar and dumped into an airplane. It is a humiliation not only of the people of Pakistan but also of democracy. The way in which General Musharraf is pouncing on public institutions and political leaders with the tacit support of the Americans, is a question not only with Pakistani people but also with the perpetuity of democracy and civil society.

17Sep-2007

Who is answerable: Mainstream Parties? Separatists or the People?

J&K is a disputed state ever since 1947. But intermittent elections are held in Indian as well as Pakistani held parts of the state to run day to day administration. Large scale irregularities take place in these elections in accordance with the wishes of respective establishments and political leaders. In a sense these would better be called "management elections".

Even elections held under the leadership of a stalwart like Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, too, could not change the disputed status of the State.

Now the position is that some of the mainstream political parties that come to power after going through the process of elections do not present any definite agenda/manifesto for the solution of the dispute. Instead they take recourse to misguiding and exploiting the people by adopting dubious slogans like use of Pakistani currency, opening of trade routes, eschewing visa system or demanding self rule and internal autonomy etc. They have been exploiting the masses for last six decades through these dubious ways. These parties have been holding power all this half a century unable to give to the people anything except suppression and oppression, economic destitution, unemployment, bribery and nepotism.

Same false promises are made with the people in elections campaigns once again. They dole out promises of solving Kashmir issue and show obeisance at the courts of Pakistani rulers thinking that the people of the state have a short memory so as to forget all the atrocities perpetrated on them in the past and once again vote them to power. More than what may be the need for free elections is the need for the separatist organizations to take part in them. And if they do not take part then these will be called "management elections".

If all political parties of the State of Jammu and Kashmir take part in the elections and 70 to 80 per cent people come out of their homes to cast their vote, it might have been possible to rescue the people from the stranglehold of existing political parties and their leaders who brought nothing but destitution. We have come to the conclusion that these political parties have the biggest hand in running the election boycott

movement of separatist parties because that paves the easy way for them to grab political power.

Who is answerable to this political scenario? Is it the people, the mainstream parties or the separatists groups? Apart from elections there are many other issues at hand, In order to coerce the ruling class; militancy has been made a pretext.

For example, a building of Maharaja's days situated on Gupkar Road became notorious as Papa II interrogation centre during the resistance movement. Nobody knows how many mothers lost their youthful sons under torture in this centre. Nobody knows how many youth where rendered crippled for the rest of their life as a result of torture. It is said that during the rule of the Maharaja, it served as his guest house. Later on a wing of the complex, which in all probability served as the residential quarter of the Maharaja's establishment, was converted into joint interrogation centre. It was also notified as District Jail for one year in order to lodge me in it as a prisoner. Thus the guest house of the Maharaja was used as CID office.

Now this structure is being converted into Chief Minister's House at a reconstruction cost of twenty-seven crores of rupees. The CM's House will have spacious 105 rooms and the total value of the complex would be around a thousand million rupees.

Does not the Chief Minister know that for 13 lakh residents of Srinagar and 9 lakh residents of Jammu city there is not a single refuse disposing plant nor is there a single re-cycling plant to destroy the garbage or to re-cycle parts of litter? Building a refuse destroying oven or an area-cycling plant in both the cities would not have cost more than 25 crores of rupees. Question may be asked what for does the chief minister of a poor state need a house with 105 room? One wishes that this enormous structure was meant for some IT Institute or for some more profitable centre. Moreover does the Chief Minister Azad think that he is sure to be the chief minister for the next term also? Who is answerable? From whom will this community demand an answer?

Talking about water resources, our first shock comes with discussing Dal Lake. The once 27 square mile lake of clean and sweet water is today faced with life and death option. A European friend of mine was on a visit to Kashmir recently. He wished to stay in a House Boat. On making first enquiry about the system of disposing of human excreta and outlets, the boat owners told him a lie saying sewerage system did exist there. He looked for the outlet pipes. On learning that the excreta went straight into

the water of the lake, he decided not to stay in a house boat.

To me refusal of the foreign visitor for the reason stated above is nothing less than a slap on the face of previous and the present government of the state. Nearly seventy thousand people live on Dal Lake. Apart from the defecating in the Dal, all the garbage and refuse of the house boats is also thrown into the waters of the lake.

These people are not shifted from the Dal; house boats are not marshaled in the Dal under a well-conceived scheme' no arrangement of disposal of garbage is undertaken. And without addressing these preliminaries, just deploying a few machines of de-weeding, only means that the authorities of LAWDA have left for themselves a safety valve to perpetrate corruption. The lake cannot be cleaned in this way and in fact the funds thus allocated for cleaning are actually wasted. There is only one way of saving Dal. It should be handed over to the UNICEF branch of the UN or to some other European organization that has expertise in cleaning water bodies. By its own action LAWDA has proved that although its literal meaning is Lakes and Water Development Authority but in reality it should be called Lakes and Water Destroying Authority.

It is a good step to beautify the banks of Jhelum. But before embarking on that scheme, it is important that the outlets of latrines and dirty water leaking over ground are got plugged. The easy way of cleaning the Jhelum is to give permission to contractors to remove the sand from its bed. The river will gain depth and its water will be cleaner when flowing freely. It would also save localities from getting submerged under floods in the river.

The bank area of Wular Lake should be afforested as before so that the in-pouring nullahs carrying silt do not fill the lake's bottom. Without essential measures it would be only a big waste to float funds for their cleaning. The people, too, have the responsibility of keeping the water bodies clean and uncontaminated. If are reckless, we make things extremely difficult for our future generations. They may not have a drop of water to use. Srinagar citizens should know it well that most of the diseases that attack them are caused by contaminated drinking water pumped out from Dal. If one dips his hand in the water of Dal for more than fifteen minutes, it will contract skin inflammation or disease.

Who is answerable? Fortunately the PCC and the Union Water Resource Minister, Prof. Saifu'd-din Soz, also happen to be a Kashmiri.

Transport

Recently Transport Corporation employees went on a long strike. Many people were wounded as a result of police action connected with the strike. The State suffered several crore rupees loss owing to the break down. Who has created a mess in the government transport organization resulting in a loss of crores of rupees to the state exchequer annually? As against these private transporters despite plying half broken buses, regularly make profits out of the industry. State transport buses are neither usually seen on the roads nor do the people shows any eagerness to travel in them. The reason is that these buses are a shamble.

It is said that private transporters bribe state transport officials for not plying corporation buses on their routes for one or the other pretext. Is it not sensible to handover the state transport corporation to private sector meaning to privatize it? By doing so the government will get back crores of rupees as the price of the vehicles and secondly the exchequer will save recurring annual losses from the sector. It is to do away with the head and the headache.

Traffic rules on books in our State are almost the same as we find these in any developed western country. But like other rules, traffic rules, too, are hardly made operational in this state. People driving in their private cars carry kids with them and place them in their lap while driving the vehicle they feel happy to let the kids handle the steering as a matter of joy. These people forget that they are not showing love to the kid but are actually endangering his life. They invite deadly accidents on the roads. I have never seen a traffic policeman every stopping such a car and taking legal action against the driver. If the policeman stops him, then instead of sending in a *challan* against him, the matter is settled through greasing the palm. Traffic rules stipulate that a child up to the age of 12 will not be allowed to occupy the front seat.

Education

Education is the foundation on which rests the future development and progress of society and community. Our government is spending crores of rupees in recruiting staff in various tehsils and districts on *Rah bare Talim* scheme in colleges and schools. Educational institutions are already exiting but their buildings have been reduced to shambles and ruins. These school buildings don't have proper sanitary arrangements. Latrines stink like hell. Owing to the shortage of teaching staff in colleges

and schools. students are unable to compiete their courses of study. Educational institutions lack discipline and code of conduct. Teachers play truants and students loiter about aimlessly wasting their time. Even non-technical education is on the downslide in the state. Thousands of persons have been employed under *Rahbar-e Talim* scheme mostly as a result of nepotism and bribery. The *Rahbar-e Talim* cadres are not visible anywhere. How then is the future of our coming generations going to be built and raised? Who will answer this question?

Nepotism and bribery in the name of migration have infested our political brokers so much so that duping has become their profession. We have come to know that many ministers have found a new way for their supporters and henchmen. They are provided migration cards and on that basis they get flats or hotel accommodation allotted to them in Srinagar and Jammu cities. In addition a cash dole of 3500 rupees is also sanctioned in their favour. 99 per cent of these so-called migrants live in their private houses in their localities and villages. The question that may be asked is who allows the state exchequer to be looted?

A Kashmiri Pandit was helped by an NC worker to obtain a migration card. The activists used to get him the cash doles paying him only half of it and retaining the other half for himself. Once the Kashmiri Pandit migrant happened to collect the cash dole personally and he was given 3500 rupees. Later on the two quarreled and came to blows.

What I mean to say is that apart from the leaders of mainstream parties, their henchmen also indulge in wide scale corruption. The very mainstream leaders have illegally occupied state lands, grasslands and *nazool* lands in the state. According to the chief minister Azad Sahib, the value of this illegally seized land is 25000 thousand crores.These mainstream parties and their leaders are now approaching the electorate to give them votes so that they might suck the remaining blood from their veins. Is it not a tragedy that the people of the state have no other alternative but to let these blood suckers suck the last drop of blood from their veins? All those parties who are labeled as separatists, the parties that want to win the rights of the people area all in a state of dispersal. They have distanced themselves from election politics. In other words these parties facilitate the blood sucking parties go on with their atrocities.

I may mention when the oppressed and the enslaved people of the world were engaged in earning their freedom at the point of gun in 1970s, the people of Kashmir including some from among the separatists were fighting election. But when in 1990s most of the enslaved peoples of the world were engaged in winning their rights through elections, the people

of Kashmir took up the gun. Today the exploitative systems in Ireland, Kosovo and Nepal are crumbling under the pressure of elections; the stalwarts of Kashmir freedom and independence are shunning elections. Are we not sidelining ourselves from the ways and methods of the people of the world? Are we not misleading our nation? Are we not confining ourselves to our four walls? Who should reply these questions?

Unidentified graves

Graveyards are seen on all the four sides in Kashmir. Unidentified graves were found in the vicinity of Uri. It spread a wave of unrest among the people of the state. In particular it snatched away the peace of mind of those whose near and dear ones had disappeared without leaving a trace for many years. The State DG said that foreign terrorist remain buried in these graves who had got killed when they had crossed the border.. If this is the truth then the government should appoint a commission of inquiry under the supervision of the High Court judges. What holds is back from taking that step? Those who are responsible for keeping uninformed about the unknown dead lying in unidentified graves have no right to rule over the people. Kashmiris may or may not have supporters in their struggle but India is answerable to the world community on the question of unidentified graves and disappeared persons. This question will be raised time and again in human rights organizations in the world. We would suggest that these two issues are investigated into and the truth should be revealed. Those responsible for the act should be brought to book.

Terrorist wave has rendered hundreds of thousands as orphans and widows in the state. Life has become a burden for them. The government has a social welfare department to look into such cases. Crores of rupees are provided in the budget for their relief. But the most unfortunate thing is that in this department from the highest officer down to an ordinary nary peon, everybody is busy in looting the money that should go to the victims. They may be enjoying luxuries by swindling the funds but snatching the rights of the orphans and widows will cast them in hell fire in the next world.

If anybody cries for his genuine rights at the department of social welfare, he is spurned . They are made to cool heels at the doors of the *patwaris* and other concerned officers. It is a time consuming process and after getting exhausted by running from pillar to post, he wants to forget the road to the welfare department. On the one hand, the path is paved for increased corruption and on the other the rights and dues of the genuine sufferers is pocket by the corrupt officials.

Recently the state government issued a notification for recruitment to the posts of *Anganwari* and helpers in the social welfare department in the State. Influential people in the official machinery once again inflicted a wound on the deserving candidates. Fake localities and wards were shown in the notification that does not exist in the revenue records nor do these localities or their names exist. Announcement of filling 20 thousand vacancies was made only to lure the people while elections are round the corner. If these jobs are allotted at all, these will go to the relatives and kith and kin of pro-Indian leaders or the relatives of the officers of the department. Poor and people without influence will remain deprived. Who is to answer, let's know? Where are the rulers, mainstream parities and separatists leading this nation to? What is going to happen to our future generations?

24Sep-2007

Harassment of the Muslims in Europe

More than 90 per cent of population in Albania, Bosnia and Turkey is of Muslims. We shall not talk of East European countries became still carry the vestiges of communism, they are poor countries. By European countries we generally mean the countries of Western Europe. These are developed countries and mostly people from Africa, Middle East and Asia come to these countries in search of livelihood. The youth dream of living life in Europe and enjoying its comforts. It is time that we examine and analyse the treatment meted out to the outsiders, especially the Muslims in these countries. West European countries now legally import people from East European countries to work in their societies. There is similarity of colour, culture and religion among them. Their arrival does not give rise to cultural and religious problems. But things are different with Asians. First of all let us show in a chart the population ratio in different West European countries.

Country	Population (Crores)	Muslims (Lakhs)
France	06	60
Denmark	54 lakh	04
Germany	08	35
England	06	18
Italy	06	10
Spain	04.30	10
Holland	01.60	10
Greece	01.11	07
Sweden	90lakh	04
Switzerland	70lakh	04
Austria	80lakh	03.5
Belgium	01	05

Out of a total population of 36 crores in 12 European countries, there are

1 crore and 70 lakh Muslims. Included among them are Muslims from Turkey, Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, India and Africa. People from Turkey, Morocco, Pakistan and African countries were imported to rebuild the economy of these countries, which had been destroyed during World War II. Now there is the third generation of those people is settled in European countries.

European countries are now in the grip of fear of Muslim population increasing at a rapid pace. After 9/11, almost every Muslim is considered an extremist in these countries. That is bound to create new problems in their social structure. One big problem with the Muslims from the very beginning has been their urge to invite their wives, families and relatives to visit them. Immigration laws were simple in the beginning. If a Muslim married a spouse in his or her original country, he or she had to show marriage documents and the partner would be allowed to enter the country. To some extent people misused this law. When a person married a woman from his original country, he entered the names of half a dozen children stating that they were the children of the previous husband of the woman he has now married. In this way, he helped his relatives to come and settle in a European country clandestinely. Nine years ago a case was registered against a Pakistani immigrant of bringing no fewer than 45 children into Holland, and obtaining about 3 million Euros as social support for them. He had listed 45 children born of his different wives in England, France, Holland and Belgium. This case received large publicity.

Things have changed and now it is extremely difficult to bring a husband or a wife into a European country. Anybody marrying in his or her original country must have an income of 2300 Euros or 126500 Indian/ 161000 Pakistani rupees to keep the partner with him. Apart from this, the partner intending to immigrate has to report to the embassy of the country concerned in his country of origin where he/she will have to take a test in the language and culture of the country of immigration. A heavy fee is charged for this. If he/she passes the test, then all papers have to be deposited in the foreign office of the country where the boy or the girl intends to immigrate. The time stipulated for passing the examination is one year. If he or she is permitted to enter the European country, then he or she will not have to take another examination. But if there is a delay of a single day in the stipulated one year time limit, then he/she will have to

reappear in the examination. If the salary is less by two cents, permission to enter is not given. I know of one case in which permission was denied. Work contract, too, should be for one year. This condition is not meant for the people of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, USA and South Korea. Living in Europe and calling the partner for joining may not be impossible but certainly it is extremely difficult. The biggest problem in European countries is of illegal immigration. Nearly five hundred thousand people from African countries, Middle East and Asia illegally enter European countries every year. According to one estimate the total number of illegal immigrants living in European countries is around 20 million (2 crore). Out of this, 19 lakh are in UK, 25 lakh in Germany, 14 lakh in Italy, and 16 lakh in France. Between 1995 and 2005 about 8125 persons trying to enter Europe countries illegally via Spain were drowned in mishaps.

In the US, the number of illegal immigrants is to the tune of 12 million (1 crore and 20 lakh). That country gives legal immigration to nearly 70 thousand aspirants every year. If the US decides to throw out illegal immigrants, the cost of undertaking the campaign would be something around 350 million dollars. France is willing to offer 8000 dollars to each family of illegal immigrants and the French President has announced expulsion of 250000 illegal immigrants from Franc every year. European countries are making new laws of immigration so complicated that it becomes impossible for an immigrant to survive. If a factory owner, shopkeeper or an individual is caught employing an illegal immigrant to hoodwink his arrest, he is fined 8000 Euros (5 lakh rupees).

In the beginning, on being caught by the police, an illegal immigrant was served a 48 hour notice. He would leave within this period and shift to some other European country. But under revised rules, an illegal immigrant when caught; is sent to the prison for a period ranging between 3 and 6 months. He is put on the airplane leaving for his country. Rules governing one's stay in Europe for work, marriage and study etc. are becoming more and more stringent day by day. One big reason for European countries to frame harsh laws is the growing unemployment. Apart from imposing fine or prescribing other punishments, illegal immigrants are exploited in many ways.

According to existing laws, the wages have to be a minimum of 8 to 10 Euros per hour. But an illegal immigrant does not receive more than 3 – 4 Euros for an hour's work. He does not enjoy any rights and can be ousted at will. He cannot protest because he is staying illegally. The condition of illegal migrants is very precarious and owing to constant fear they cannot take part in the social life of the country of immigration. In case of illness, they do not receive proper medical treatment. The law says that anybody above 14 years of age must always keep his identity card with him failing which a policeman can check and impose a fine on him. European countries are seriously thinking of sending back both legal and illegal immigrants to their countries of origin after paying them adequate remuneration. The matter is hotly debated in Holland and an offer is proposed according to which an immigrant agreeing to surrender his Dutch passport, and willing to return to his original country, would be paid 600 Euros annually for 20 years and a free air ticket to visit Holland every year for 20 years.

A campaign of forcing Muslim women not to use veil started in France, Germany, UK and Holland. The veil was not discarded but face cover was disallowed for Muslim women. People attending any social function like a concert have to show their identity cards. Mosques and seminaries are under supervision. Intelligence agencies hire people from the Muslim community to work for them. Many clerics were expelled from UK, France and Holland on allegations of propagating religious extremism. This shows that the attitude of Europeans towards the Muslims has changed: they are frequently humiliated.

According to one survey 54 per cent people in Holland regard Muslims as terrorists and Islam as a religion of terrorism. Wilders, a member of Dutch parliament demanded in the parliament that the Qur'an should be banned in his country. The Dutch parliament has 9 members from his party. Muslims are not posted at sensitive places like the airports. Attitude of people --- common men, shopkeepers, doctors, bus drivers --- immediately changes on seeing a man with a beard. They feel scared. During check in at the airport, they are required to take off their shoes, belt and everything in the pockets. It is proposed to install X-ray machines on airports so that when you pass through it, your entire body is x-rayed. Domestic disputes of Muslim families are exaggerated and the Safe

Homes meant for distressed women and children are subsidised by European Union. A Muslim woman or girl who lodges a complaint against her husband or father of forcing her to follow Islamic ways or restraining her from adopting European culture can get admission very easily in these Houses. After some time she is provided with independent shelter also. She is taught some skill and becomes independent economically. According to a survey 75 per cent of the inmates of these Safe Homes are Muslim women. The strange thing is that no attempt of reconciliation is made between the women going to Safe Houses and their estranged husband's or relatives. The statement of a woman or a girl is enough to take up her case. In this context many women have been murdered by men from Turkey and Morocco.

Funding of Muslim institutions has been gradually stopped. Subsidies from the government for Muslim Trusts, Seminaries and Charitable Institutions have been stopped. According to information, booking of a large group of Muslims in one flight is discouraged. After 9/11 it is very difficult for a member of any Islamic propagation mission to obtain a visa... In fact no country in Europe as well the US, issues visa on the basis of religious propagation, which was easily obtainable prior to 9/11. An immigrant can be arrested at any time without showing any cause and enquiry can go on for any length of time from 7 to 120 days. If an amount exceeding 15,000 dollars or Euros is sent through a bank, there is thorough probing into the transaction. If an amount exceeding 5000 dollars or Euros is sent in the name of a Muslim, it is thoroughly checked.

Turkey is kept out of European Union under various pretexts although many countries that applied for membership much later than Turkey did, have already been admitted. Arguments forwarded for denial of membership to Turkey are its economic problems, and Cyprus and Kurdish issues. Legal immigrants, given passports and citizenship of various European countries, usually get only menial jobs like sanitary workers, salesman or sales girl etc. But those doing some business or running a shop are doing better. Immigrant's concentred anywhere in a European country are slightly better than those living in isolation. Since Muslims do not culturally mix up with other communities, it creates some problems for them as well as the local population. People from other countries like India, Sri Lanka and East Europe easily accept influences

of local culture. Therefore neither the immigrants from these countries nor the local population have any problems of cultural mix up. European countries are now allowing professionals (talent) like engineers, computer experts and banking professionals etc. on contract basis. Germany brought about 25 thousand Indian computer engineers during a period of five years.

Universities and other higher educational institutions in European countries and in the USA are considered the lighthouses of knowledge. Great leaders of India and Pakistan (and in many other countries) were educated in these famous universities and institutions --- Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Allama Iqbal, Liaqat Ali Khan and others who illuminated the world through their intellectual capabilities. How sad that after 9/11 these great institutions are almost closed upon the Muslims. An odd Muslim student may get admission in one of these institutions but the effort he or she has to put in and the amount of money he needs to spend are almost forbidding. It means that after 9/11 Muslim students have been denied even the technical training and education in western countries. Entrance of the Muslims in aeronautical institutions is almost sealed.

Thus the Muslims are caught up in a reverse of the saying of the Holy Prophet, viz. seek knowledge even in China. We have closed the doors of knowledge upon us by our action. Europe is not to be blamed for it. Muslims could bring in their partner to a European country just by getting the marriage document translated for presentation. Some Muslims would fraudulently bring their relatives by concocting story that would win him or her asylum. Authorities believed their story because people in Europe generally think that one does not tell a lie. The interesting point is wherein the secret of Europe's progress lies in all walks of life like economic, social, and educational system, quality of governance and administration etc. It is a long story and I may take it up in any subsequent issue.

Nevertheless, there is a growing apprehension among European countries. They think that if the population of the Muslims increase with the present rate then after 50 years there is every possibility of a demographic change in their societies and the Muslims will be in a majority who may declare a Muslim State. If Spanish speaking immigrants

continue to move to the US, a time will come when there will be the government of Spanish speaking group in that country. People from South America are immigrating in large numbers.

An interesting idea has been floating in the west for some time. Educated Muslims living in Europe feel that Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda are a conspiracy of the US and European countries to deny the Muslims access to higher knowledge and technology on the basis of terrorism. They also think that terrorism is not a movement against the people in Europe or in the US: it is a conspiracy against the Muslims, they assert.

01Oct-2007

Pak situation, General Musharraf and Kashmir?

Political landscape in Pakistan is changing fast for last one month. Lawyers had filed a case in Pakistan Supreme Court challenging the election of Musharraf as President while holding the post of Chief of the Army Staff. The General expected a verdict from the SC that would go against him. In order to save his position, he resorted to the imposition of emergency. Crack down followed and the process of widespread arrests of lawyers and political activists began. The whole world condemned imposition of emergency and demanded its immediate lifting. The American Senate and the Congress and in particular Democrats demanded of Bush to stop aid to Pakistan. From among European Union, Holland stopped three million Euro aid.

Although imposition of emergency is condemned throughout the world and particularly in the western countries, yet it appears nothing more than crocodile's tears. After all General Musharraf and the Pakistani Army are performing frontline role in the so-called fight against terrorism of the US and the West. The US had tried to save Musharraf through Benazir Bhutto. In the light of the deal forged by the US between Musharraf and Benazir, the later did return to Pakistan. But on marking the antagonism of Pakistani media, judiciary and political parties against Musharraf, Benazir and her Peoples Party, both tried to keep themselves at a distance from the deal. However, one of the reasons why the deal become ineffective is the reaction of the ruling Muslim League (Q). They were not prepared to part with power and forge an alliance with Benazir in any case.

The act of General Musharraf in imposing emergency and subsequent treatment of the judiciary, lawyers and media has no parallel in any

African banana state governed by a dictator. TV stations were shut down. Chief Justice of Supreme Court, seven of its judges, and judges of all the four High courts of four provinces who had declined to take an oath under interim constitution were not only dismissed, but the Chief Justice of the SC and its other seven judges were put under house arrest. This despotic treatment of judges belied Musharraf's claim that emergency had to be imposed in the country to curb terrorism because all measures taken after the imposition of emergency were only meant to secure personal position and power of General Musharraf.

Following the imposition of emergency, the Taliban and al Qaeda intensified their operations against Pakistani Army in Waziristan and Swat regions. In fact they brought under their control a large part of Swat and many Pakistani soldiers laid down their arms before them. Taliban severed the heads of some soldiers as well.

Actually one needs to understand the history of Pakistan's Pushtu speaking areas. The people of these regions fought against the British raj for nearly 200 years. Prior to that, they had been fighting relentlessly against the Mughals. Pathan areas like Landi Kotal, Bajaur Agency, Bara and Waziristan have always remained outside the administrative control of Peshawar and Islamabad. They have been running their administration under the age- old jirga system. When Russians attacked Afghanistan, the Pathans took up arms against them. Their mujahedeen were frugally helped by the US, the West and the Muslims in their fight against Russia. .

From the days of General Ayub Khan, Pathans were recruited in Pakistani military establishment besides the Punjabis. That is why after the Punjabis, the Pathans are in a majority in Pakistan Army. Pakistan as an ally of the Americans has deployed its army in Pushtun speaking areas. This is the reason why the Pathan establishment in Pakistani military especially officers of junior rank and soldiers is unhappy with the Pakistani military regime. That explains why a large number of Pakistani soldiers especially the Pathans laid arms before the Taliban. Owing to this situation, General Musharraf concluded an agreement with the Taliban and exchanged prisoners of war with them. This caused much anger in American circles.

By deploying her troops against Pushtu speaking people, Pakistan has taken a big risk under the leadership of General Musharraf. Late Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was given the title of Frontier Gandhi wanted the creation of Pakhtunistan. Pushtuns have a sway over parts of Afghanistan and of NWFP and half of Baluchistan. They were once fancying the creation of a separate homeland named Pakhtunistan. If a viable solution of the strife between Taliban and Pakistan Army does not appear, it may lead to the breaking of Pakistan. A Pathan remarked, "Our job is to fight. We have time and you folks have it not."

The West needs Pakistani Army to become frontline fighting force against terrorism as the ally of the West and the US. Thus General Musharraf has emerged the most obedient soldier of the US and of the West. But the internal situation in Pakistan has come to a point where in streets and lanes, in courts and chambers, in cities and towns only one slogan is heard, viz. Go Musharraf go. According to a survey made during the months of September of the current year (2007) 76 % Pakistanis have demanded that General Musharraf either leave or resign. After the imposition of emergency 83 per cent people have voted against it.

Another important change is visible in the Pakistani society. The regard and respect which the people had for her Army has got diluted. When the jawans of Pakistani army get killed in fighting against Taliban, no segment of Pakistani society is heard resenting their deployment. The simmering lava of hatred and its negative impact are fast moving towards Pakistani Army. Pakistani Generals have already trampled most of its civilian administrative and judicial institutions under their iron heels so much so that Pakistan military controls 43% of her economy. This reminds one of German dispensation under Hitler.

Now in these circumstances, the US jointly working with Pakistan army will ultimately have to make General Musharraf its scapegoat in order to resolve the crisis in Pakistan. May be after he is removed from military and from power, he would be given asylum in a foreign country. The new COS and the Army having been separated from power will be used only against the terrorists. Civilian government can thus be brought back after the process of elections is over. A retired Army General or a senior political personality may be appointed the President. .It is also rumored

that after ironing out differences with Benazir, Musharraf is also trying to mend fence with Nawaz Sharif. Muslim League (Q) which had betrayed Nawaz Sharif is also exerting pressure on Musharraf desiring that instead of Benazir, it is better to seek alliance with Nawaz Sharif. But if there is no pressure from the US and Saudi Arabia on Nawaz Sharif, in that case the later will in no case agree to a compromise with Musharraf. After all it was Musharraf who had deposed him. Moreover during last eight years, Musharraf left no stone unturned to humiliate Nawaz Sharif and his party Muslim League(Q). Therefore Nawaz Sharif and his party will not be prepared for a suicidal decision. Political events in Pakistan are moving fast against the present regime. A glance on the history of Pakistan shows that if the masses of people in Pakistan hail a dictator as the deliverer when he comes to the helm of affairs, they dump him with worst sobriquets when they find him on the exit. Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan met with that type of treatment and General Zia had to pay the price with his life.

What could be the impact of Pakistan's internal situation on Kashmir? For last five years General Musharraf has emerged as a powerful and authoritative person in Pakistan. India knows that signing a deal with Pakistani civilian leadership cannot be as much dependable as one concluded with a military ruler. But India has wavered in concluding any agreement with Pakistani military dictators. If the mandarins in the foreign office or home office in New Delhi think that there will be an impact on Kashmir militancy or on overall situation in Kashmir, one can say they are living in a fool's paradise. It must be clear that Kashmir policy is the very basis of Pakistan's policy. Even after Musharraf goes, Pakistan's Kashmir policy will remain what it is and has been. The military establishment of the ISI will continue to carry on their agenda in Kashmir. They will not let India rest till they have secured a lasting solution of Kashmir issue according to their choice. Pakistan is more concerned to keep her people happy than to serve the interests of Kashmiris. Kashmir means their major water resource concern. If anarchy exacerbates in Pakistan, it will result in increased incidents of militancy in Kashmir. It is because Pakistan's institutions will find an easy pretext in saying that they are unable to put effective control on incidents of violence in Pakistan. How then are they able to control violence in other countries?

But at the same time if a civilian government takes over in Pakistan, even then Kashmir policy will remain in the hands of the military establishment of Pakistan or its agencies. Sentiments have been aroused throughout Pakistan in regard to Kashmir and more so in Punjab. In view of that no civilian government in Pakistan will be in a position to sign an agreement with India, which in the eyes of the people of Pakistan is tantamount to acquiescing to India. A civilian government in Pakistan may not encourage militancy but it will for certain continue to extend financial, moral and diplomatic support to political parties that are working in the interests of Pakistan in Kashmir.

At the same time the most unfortunate thing is that the Kashmiris are not prepared to unite for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of the people of Kashmir. A broad - based unity will eliminate their small selfish interests. As far as India's policy in Kashmir is concerned, the Indians do not allow any moderate Kashmiri leader to come up. Not only that, they see to it that mainstream parties remain at loggerheads with each other. India has never tried to find a solution of Kashmir problem by engaging Kashmiris. They have sought opportunities to humiliate Kashmiris and find temporary solutions to day to day problems through suppression and muscle power. However, Indians should not forget that Kashmiris have given over a hundred thousand lives in sacrifice. Whatever the situation in Pakistan, at the end of the day, India has to find a solution of the problem by engaging Kashmiris. What is happening at the moment is that humiliation and killing of innocent civilians is engineered through the instrumentality of security forces and the police. It is to sow the seeds of hatred against themselves. No space is left to Kashmiris to speak the truth. In a recent statement, the former CM of J&K, Dr.Farooq Abdullah said that they shall have to rethink whether the accession with India of 1947 was a right decision? Keeping the entire spectrum of political situation in view, we shall have to accept that there is no way out except that of a peaceful solution.

26Nov-2007

Violation of Human Rights and our attitude?

This year to the UN Human Rights Commission has expressed its concern on the violation of human rights in Kashmir. It says that under Special Power Act, Indian security forces are abusing human rights. Owing to special powers given to security forces, there is an increase in the cases of disappearance, illegal confinement, torture, sexual abuse of women and custodial killings in the State. The Commission is of opinion that even the court orders are ignored in cases of human rights because of Special Power Act.

World opinion is divided in regard to the solution of Kashmir dispute. The biggest hurdle in the way of solution of the dispute is the neo-colonial mentality of both India and Pakistan. International opinion has always condemned the security forces and the militants in the context of abuse of human rights. It goes to the credit of international bodies that they have not minced words when describing the violation of human rights cases. Contrary to this, various mainstream or separatist organizations in Kashmir are rife with malice. Whenever security forces committed violation of human rights, all political parties including the mainstream groups raised hue and cry in protest. But when the militants or unknown gunmen committed kidnappings or, murder, these parties and groups sealed their mouths. They showed utter apathy towards the shedding of an innocent blood.

A major tragedy with the Kashmiri society is that the people martyred by the militants and unknown gunmen, have not evoked resentment of the people. On account of this, our movement had to face dire consequences on internal as well as external level. The assassins of eminent people like Mirwaiz Maulavi Farooq, Mirwaiz (South Kashmir) Qazi Nisar, and Doctor

Guru, Vice Chancellor Mushirul Haq, Professor A.A. Wani and others were left unidentified and untraced. On internal level, people got fed up with the movement and distanced themselves from it. On international level, a very wrong impression about us was propagated that we had adopted double standards in regard to the issue of human rights violations. The situation has come to this pass that even if the workers of mainstream parties are gunned down by the militants, they do not utter a word about this crime. They have now begun to own the separatist agenda keeping in view the impending elections.

On 18 November 2007, one Riyaz Ahmad Sofi, a baker by profession was brutally murdered by 9 RR gunman. All separatist groups and mainstream parties staged a protest and rightly so. Indian political leaders Indian Army commanders claim that Indian Army is a disciplined army. But if a disciplined army indulges in despicable acts like killing innocent people, molesting women and humiliating people on the streets or in their houses, then such an army becomes a symbol of colonialism. It brings defamation to the basic principles of Indian State and the teachings of Gandhi ji. Any kind of valuation of human rights at the hands of security forces is condemnable. Such wanton acts deserve to be vehemently protested against.

On the other hand, another person by the same name of Riyaz Ahmad Khan of Kulgam, who was a baker by profession, had two small kids and his wife was expecting another baby, was brutally massacred by the militants. None among the separatist groups or from mainstream political parties opened his mouth. Only CPI member Mr. Tarigami visited both the bereaved families to express his condolence. This is an example of violation of human rights and this discriminatory behaviour has been in place in Kashmir for last two decades. One Nayeem Gul Dar of Hardushew, Sopor, and a computer engineer were massacred and nobody condemned it. We mention only a few of the instances of violation of human rights by the security forces. These have come to our notice either through official sources or through the media. We would like to re-state that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has repeatedly said that there would be zero tolerance of violation of human rights in Kashmir. State Chief Minister has been boasting time and on that no human rights violations are taking place at the hands of the security forces during his

regime. We mention only a few incidents of human rights violations by security forces taken place only recently.

1.A young woman named Fahmida was killed in cross firing on 28 June. Demonstrations against this killing were staged in Kupwara. 2. A CRPF personnel was arrested in Zevran, Kangan for molesting a dumb girl. 3. People caught hold of two personnel of forces in Kunan Bandipora and tonsured their heads for attempting to molest a woman. They were handed over to the police later on. 4. A student named Muhammad Ramazan was killed by the security forces in Watargam, Rafiabad. People demonstrated against the killing and the police, as usual, lathi charged the demonstrators. 5. Bilal Ahmad Bhat was killed by the firing of CRPF in Gabarapora, Pulwama. Gajan Kumar, the accused was arrested. 6. A case of attack on police station in Magam, Handwara was brought against a Colonel and a Major. The case is hanging fire. 7. A teacher of Rah bare Talim scheme named Abdur Rashid Mir of Ravathpore, Kupwara met with his death at the hands of the security forces. The whole area protested. 8. A 15-year old mentally deranged youth Aqil Ahmad Mir was shot at and killed in Watlab, Sopor. 9. People in Pattan protested against loot and arson in Sayed Mohalla by the security forces. They brought charges against the culprits. 10. Personnel of 44 RR gunned down Altaf Ahmad Wagay on 16 October 2007 at Keler in Pulwama. 11. Bashir Ahmad Khan of Samlar Kota Gujjar Basti was picked up by the personnel of 10 Paramilitary Unit from his home on 15 November. He was left half dead. 12. Security forces gunned down one vegetable vendor Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat in Kalosa, Bandipora.

These few incidents recorded here took place in recent months. We are not mentioning of many localities destroyed in clashes with the militants and the properties looted. The government has not given them any compensation. What was their fault? It is just that militants drawing support from the gun keep away from the searching eyes of the security forces seek shelter in the houses of ordinary people. Obviously the house owner is reluctant to give them shelter. It is just like security personnel enter the houses of ordinary people without a proper warrant to conduct searches and pick up people for interrogation. If ordinary people are not able to prevent security force personnel from entering their house against the wishes of the owner, how is the owner going to stop a militant seeking

shelter in his house? Is it not a blatant violation of human rights to destroy these localities and not pay any compensation for the losses suffered? People and vehicles are stopped at odd places, asked to stand in line and humiliated in the name of searches. Is it not violation of human rights? Former militants, who have bid farewell to the gun for more than ten or fifteen years, are required to show up in the police stations and army camps where they are humiliated. Is this not violation of human rights? If people are denied employment in a government department just because of political differences or some far-fetched involvement in gun running or denying the issuance of passport to them or to their wards is surely violation of the Indian Constitution. No fewer than six thousand passport applications in this category are pending with the passport office for disposal. Incidents pertaining to the former and the sitting Chairman of Sopor Municipal Committee are not without interest. Fifteen or sixteen years ago both of them had crossed the border to "Azad Kashmir". They abjured militancy, took part in municipal elections and became Councillor and then Chairman of the Municipal Committee. Both of them were denied travel documents for going on Hajj pilgrimage. On the other hand if any former militant commander or a political personality while sitting in a closed door room assures that he would not do anything harmful to the interests of India, he is not only given the passport immediately but also meets VIP treatment at the hands of the authorities concerned.

We are aware that if a security force personnel violates human rights, he is usually subjected to disciplinary action within the ambit of the organization. Punishment is given in serious cases as well. But justice is not only to be seen but should actually satisfy the victim. An incident happened with a woman Army Captain. Court martial was ordered against a General and the whole world saw and heard how justice was done.

It is important that security force personnel are properly educated in the matter of protection of human rights. Whenever there is a case of high handedness or tyranny or force or innocent killing against the security forces, severe action must follow.

Militants are also carrying gun here in Kashmir. Some of them are called unknown gun wielders. People suspect that unknown gunmen are in

actuality state sponsored gun wielders. But if the killing of an ordinary citizen takes place at the hands of the militants or unknown militants, it becomes clear without much difficulty whether the killing has happened at the hands of the official killers or the militants. The activity of the victim is a clear clue for identifying the killer. We give here some instances of killings at the hands of the militants and identification made at public level. My appeal to all conscientious and separatist organizations is that killing by any person is killing humanity. Therefore killings done by the militants and unknown gun men should also be condemned. It is to give a human face to our movement. Ultimately it is a Kashmiri, the son of the soil, who gets killed.

It should be noted that we have said nothing about the killing of security force personnel at the hands of the militants or the other way round. We have said about the killing of ordinary citizens and which fall in the category of human rights violation cases. It is a heinous crime to slit the throat of a man. On 5 December, the chairman of Hurriyat Conference (G) Janab Geelani made an appeal that "slitting the throat of a human being is un-Islamic. The militants should desist from slitting the throat of any anti-movement person because it goes against our movement. Wherever there are irrefutable proofs, such cases should be brought to public level failing which it will be very easy for the security forces to legitimise killing of innocent people in the name of unknown gunmen." Here are some instances:

1.On 29 June, militants from Daligam, Banihal severed the head of Shabbir Ahmad Kuli. 2. Militants killed Abdul Majid on 23 June 2007 in Doda. 3. The headless body of Farooq Ahmad, a police functionary, was recovered in Naibug, Tral. 4. Militants shot and killed a political worker named Ghulam Hassan Dar. 6 Militants killed Mrs. Shahina Akhtar, wife of Muhammad Yusuf Dar in Waghama village of Bijbehara. 6. Militants killed Bashir Ahmad Wani, a surrendered militant in Shirpora, Pattan. 7. Abdur Rashid Magrey of Keler, Pulwama was kidnapped by the militants and then gunned down. 8. Ghulam Rabani, a driver was killed by the militants in Rajpura, Keler. 9. Militants murdered a widow named Zeitun in Chak Arslan village in Bandipora. 10. Militants killed 27 year old Firdaus Ahmad Mir of Janwara, Sopor at about evening prayer. 11. Militants killed Ghulam Nabi Khanday, a contractor of Khandey pora in Pulwama. 12. A

labourer, Nazir Ahmad Sheikh was hanged to death by the militants in Mirabad, Tral. 13. Militants killed Muhammad Husain Shabnam, a PDP worker in Kunzar, Tangmarg. 14. Six year old child of Muhammad Rafiq, an employee of Territorial Army was killed by the militants in Kandi, Rajouri. 15. Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh, a Congress worker in a village in Kishtwar was killed by the militants. 16. Militants killed Ghulam Nabi Wani, the NC Councillor of Khanyar. 17. A 12th class student in Sopor was killed by the militants on 28 November 2007.

Whatever the reason, killing cannot be justified. If we start a killing spree on small political differences or other petty matters, then in future everybody in Kashmir could get killed. These figures have been obtained from dependable newspapers and weeklies. If the militants are not involved in terrorist acts, why then is not there a condemnation of murder of political workers or ordinary men and why are not these stopped? In many cases, the militants own the responsibility of killing.

We must know that howsoever hard we may try to bring the onus of killings and violation of human rights to the door steps of Indian Security forces to the notice of people abroad, the fact is that human rights organizations working on international level and the United Nations do come to know of each killing in detail from their independent sources. They know who is involved and who is responsible for the killing.

People in Jammu and Kashmir no more trust the crocodile tears of mainstream parties. Be it the leadership of NC or of PDP, they pose to be more grief-stricken on excesses committed by the security forces than the separatists. If their own workers are brutally murdered by the militants, they desist from opening their mouth and protesting against it. This is because they do not want to lose the elections that might take place in near future. But the two parties should know that the memory of Kashmiris is not that weak so as to forget the oppression, loot and tyranny perpetrated on people during their rule. If they think otherwise they are living in a fool's paradise. What they actually want is to remain in power and to loot the public exchequer. At the same time they want to claim to be the representatives of the people of Kashmir. And people know these antics are nothing but election tactics. Violation of human rights is a long story that may fill thousands of pages. These include

denying facilities to the prisoners, not setting them free even after the verdict of the courts, encounters after release from prisons, torture in jails and police stations, arresting a relative against an absconding culprit and punishing them, etc. These are some of the gravest human rights violations. There is a State Human Rights Commission on official level. Its mandate is not only to protect human rights of the people but also to recommend for compensation to the victims of human rights violations. But unfortunately it is a lame and semi-paralysed institution. It does recommend compensation for the victims but its recommendations are never translated into practice. One may say the SHRC has become a pawn in the hands of political parties and security forces and its reports remain confined to a few written or typed pages of paper which compels an oppressed Kashmiri to cool his heels at various office doors for endless months and years.

We must emphasise that the people of Jammu and Kashmir need not make appeals to the human rights organizations of the UN. Instead they should strive to stop the erosion of the authority of the SHRC. If this Commission discharges its duties and obligations with honesty and without influence from any quarter, we are confident human rights of people in the State would be protected

10 Dec-2007

Why recurrent killing of democracy in Pakistan?

Pakistan Army has been usurping power intermittently ever since that country came into existence.But imposition of emergency and decapitating her judiciary with a view to reinforce the military dictatorship, have shaken Pakistan's civil society. Besides the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the CJs of four provincial high courts, 34 judges in all have been dismissed. This has caused a wave of resentment in the civil society against the military rule. Had not Musharraf been the recipient of American largesse, a military revolution would have overtaken Pakistan by now. Imposition of emergency and its aftermath have brought universal disapproval of Pakistan's military regime. Apart from this, assaults on judges, lawyers and intellectuals have further tarnished Pakistan's image. However, as a repercussion, this has strengthened the desire for democracy in all segments of Pakistan society.

When some people or organizations in Kashmir raise slogans in support of Pakistani military dictators, pro-democratic elements in Pakistani society look at them with surprise and pathetic commiseration. They wonder why these few people and organizations in Kashmir come out in support of the dictators instead of supporting Pakistan's pro-democracy movement,

What are the reasons that Pakistan Army is out to play with the interests of the country recurrently? From General Ayub Khan to General Musharraf down the line, why are these people determined to liquidate democratic dispensation, and throw out 37 judges for refusing to take an oath of office under PCO? Why are commandos deployed to dislodge them from official residences? Is there anything more of humiliation than this a country's ruling clique can flung into the face of its judiciary?

Pakistan Army has made the people in general and those in Punjab in particular a hostage to its anti-India hysteria. Kashmir issue has come handy in this process. Meanwhile Pakistan Army managed its control on

almost all civil institutions and economic fountainheads to become a virtual military corporate. This has been amply reflected in a document issued by Lahore based Institute for Peace and Secular Studies.

Such countries in the world as have remained under full or partial military regimes ultimately headed towards economic catastrophe. The axiom goes that a bad democracy is better than a good dictatorship. Look at the political arrangement in Muslim countries and also the African countries; you will find that despite being in possession of resources, the people in general are doomed to be poor, deprived and destitute. They are the victims of American and western exploitation. In the Asian continent we can cite the examples of Singapore and Malaysia, which have achieved the level of western economic progress only through democracy.

The American and European companies are engaged in exploiting mineral resources including oil in the Muslim and African countries. Whenever people raise their voices in demand of their rights, jails, gallows and incarceration become their fate. This, too, is the tragedy of Pakistan. Her army has made great efforts to become a corporate in order to have power in its hands. In normal course of things, the army's job is to defend the country but not to run a corporate. In the US and Europe very rarely a dictator, a general or a military officer becomes the head of a civil institution. It is impossible for any of these democratic countries to install a senior military officer as the chief of a civilian organization or institution during active service.

Take the case of India. Till the other day, all the three chiefs of India's defence forces were required to go through security check at the airports as usual while travelling abroad. From a General down the line to a Brigadier or a Colonel, they ride in small cars, motorbikes or on bicycles. This makes India's democratic institutions stronger and stronger. A Brigadier or a Major General does not express himself before a minister. The question of dismissing the judges of a supreme court and ousting them from their official residence is the wildest of thoughts one can ever imagine in India.

Our purpose in writing this article is to prompt the people of Jammu and Kashmir to cast a glance at a country with which some of political parties in the State scramble for accession. We want that the people should not weaken the movement on international or on domestic level by raising slogans for accession to one or the other country. On the other hand they should try to bring Jammu and Kashmir back to its position in 1947 and this has to be a united movement in Jammu and Kashmir. Besides tens of thousands of Army Men working in government-owned airline and other

government-owned industries here's list of Army Officers in Civilian Govt. Departments and Government owned industries and civilian institutions of Pakistan including Universities.

General Pervez Musharraf (President of Pakistan.
Major General (Retd) Muhammad Anwar (President of Azad Kashmir)
Lt Gen (Retd) Khalid Maqbool (Governor Punjab)
Commander Khalil (Governor NWFP)
Lt General (Retd) Javed Ashraf Qazi (Federal Education Minister)
Col (Retd) S.K. Tressler (Federal Minorities & Culture Minister)
Lt Gen. Hamid Javed (Chief Executive's Chief of Staff)
Lt General Muneer Hafeez (Chief of NAB)
Major General Usman Shah (Deputy Chief of NAB)
Major General Shujaat Zameer (Deputy Chief of NAB)
Major General Abdul Jabbar Bhatti (Chief, Regional Accountability Bureau,RAB,Punjab Air Vice Marshal Zakaullah (Chief of RAB NWFP)
Major General Tariq Bashir (Chief of RAB Sindh)
Major General Owais Mushtaq (Chief of RAB Balochistan)
Lt General (Retd) Hamid Nawaz (Secretary Defence);
Air Marshal (Retd) Zahid Anees (Secretary Defence Production)
Lt General (Retd) Saeedul Zafar (Secretary Railways)
Major General (Retd) Fazal Ghafoor (Ambassador to North Korea)
Brigadier (Retd) Abdul Majeed Khan (Ambassador to Tajikistan)
Major General (Retd) Salimullah(Ambassador to UAE)
Major General (Retd) Muhammad Hassan Aqeel (Ambassador to Thailand) Lt General (Retd) Asad Durrani (Ambassador to Saudi Arabia)
Vice Admiral (Retd) Shamoon Aslam Khan (Ambassador to Ukraine)
Air Marshal (Retd) Najeeb Akhtar (Ambassador to Brazil)
Major General Syed Mustafa Anwar Hussain (Ambassador to Indonesia)
Lt General (Retd) Muhammad Shafeeq (Ambassador to Bahrain)
Major General (Retd) Agha Masood Hassan (DG of Postal Services)
Major General Farrukh Javed (Chairman National Highway Authority)
Rear Admiral Ahmad Hayat (Chairman Karachi Port Trust)
Rear Admiral Sikandar Viqar Naqvi (Chairman Port Qasim Authority)
Vice Admiral Tauqir Hussain Naqvi (Chairman National Shipping Corporation) Major General (Retd) Muhammad Hassan (Chief of National Fertilizerm Corporation) A Lt. General (Chairman Pakistan Steel Mills)
Lt Colonel (Retd) Akbar Hussain (Export Processing Zone Authority)
Major General Shehzad Alam Malik (Chairman Pakistan Telecommunications Authority) Air Vice Marshal Azhar Masood (Chairman National Telecommunications Authority) Brigadier (Retd) Muhammad Saleem (Chairman NADRA)
Brigadier Mirza Babar Aziz (DG NADRA)
Brigadier (Retd) Muhammad Anwar Khan (DG NADRA NWFP)



Late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Greets Hashim Qureshi After Hijacking in 1971 at Lahore Airport While Ashraf Qureshi is Sitting in Aeroplane.



Late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto talking with Hashim Qureshi
While Dr. Mubashshir Hasan & Deputy Commissioner of Lahore
Standing Near by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.



Hashim Qureshi Hugging by Maqbool Butt Shaheed.

Major General Raza Hussain (Chairman SUPARCO)
Major General Sabihuddin Bokhari (Surveyor General of Pakistan)
Brigadier Javed Iqbal Cheema (DG National Crisis Management Cell)
Air Marshal (Retd) Shafeeq Haider (Chairman Federal Public Service Commission) Lt General Arshad Hussain (Member Federal Public Service Commission) Lt General (Retd) Jehangir Nasrullah (Chairman Punjab Public Service Commission) Major General (Retd) Arshad Chaudhry (Member Punjab Public Service Commission)
Major General (Retd) Arshadullah Tarar (Member Punjab Public Service Commission) Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Aliuddin (DG Civil Aviation Authority) Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Arshad Saleem (Deputy DG Civil Aviation Authority) Major General Zafar Abbas (DG Anti-Narcotics Force)
Major General Syed Haider Javed (DG National Logistics Cell)
Major General (Retd) Inayatullah Khan Niazi (DG Auqaf, the Deptt. Of Historical Relics)Major General Pervez Akmal (MD OGDC)
Brigadier (Retd) Rizvan Ashraf (General Manager OGDC)
Brigadier (Retd) Ishtiaq Ali Khan (MD Pakistan Mineral Development Authority) Major General (Retd) Hamid Hassan Butt (Chairman Pakistan Railways) Lt General (Retd) Syed Shujaat Ali Khan (Rector Engineering University Lahore) Lt General (Retd) Arshad Mehmood (Vice Chancellor Punjab University) Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Sardar Khan (Vice Chancellor Engineering University Peshawar)Captain (Retd) U.A.G. Isani (Vice Chancellor Islamabad University)Lt General (Retd) Sardar Ali (DG National Institute of Public Administration) Brigadier (Retd) Maqsoodul Hassan (DG Directorate of Education)Brigadier Muhammad Ejaz (Home Secretary Punjab)Brigadier Abdur Rehman (Director Health NWFP)
Brigadier Shadab (Secretary C&W Punjab) Brigadier Anees (Chairman Punjab Privatisation Commission) Colonel (Retd) Shahid Qureshi (DIG Sindh Telecommunications) Colonel (Retd) Ghulam Hussain (Secretary S&GAD NWFP)Brigadier Mukhtar (Home Secretary, Sindh)
Brigadier Zaheer Qadri (DG, KDA, Sindh and not Secretary C&W NWFP)
Brigadier (Retd) Akhtar (Secretary to Governor Sindh)
Major General (Retd) Imtiaz (Chairman Pakistan Athletics Federation)
Brigadier Saulat Abbas (DG Pakistan Sports Board)
Brig. Khalid Javed, DG Projects Directorate, NADRA, Islamabad
Col Talmeez Abbas, DG Dataware Housing, NADRA, Islamabad
Maj Tahir M. Alvi DDG, Project Directorate, NADRA, Islambad
Brig Safdar Husain Awan is the Secy (C&W) NWFP Brig Qadri is DG KDA Brig Mohtarim is Home Secretary Sindh Major General (Retd)

Hashmi, Registrar, Pakistan Engineering Council Major General (Retd) Anis Bajwa, Chairman PTDC Major General (Retd) Asif Riaz Bokhari, NRB Brig Muhammad Toseef Uz Zaman Khan, Civil Aviation Authority Brig Saeed Ahmed Malik, WAPDA Head Qtrs Lahore, Brig Muhammad Iqbal, WAPDA HQ Lahore,Brig Mushtaq Ahmed, WAPDA HQ, Lahore Brig Khalid Sohail Cheema, DG Pak PWD,Brig Shamshad Khan, GM NWFP NHA;Brig (Retd) Zareen Khan, Project Incharge Ghazi Brotha Dam WAPDA,Brig (Retd) Mukhtar Ahmed Tariq, GM Admin OGDC Brig (Retd) Muhammad Hamayoun Khan, GM Procurement OGDC Brig (Retd) Sardar Javed Ashraf, MD KW&SB,Brig (Retd) Nisar, IG Prisons (Sindh) Brig (Retd) Zafar Ahmed,Malik, Karachi Building & Control Authority,Brig (Retd) Aftab Ahmed, DG PHA; Brig (Retd) Dilbar Husain Naqvi, MD National Construction Company,Colonel Rauf, IG Prisons, NWFP,Colonel Asif Jamal, MD, Multan Development Authority Colonel (Retd) Najam ul Hasan Malik, TMO Rawalpindi
Colonel (Retd) Hafiz Abdur Rehman Malik, MD WASA, Rawalpindi
Colonel (Retd) Kanwar Muhammad Sherbaz Khan, GM CS&E OGDC
Lt Col Muhammad Azim, GM NHA,LT Col Naqeeb Amjad Malik, Manager CS&E OGDC,Lt Col (Retd) Aziz ul Haque Mirza, Member (Operations) NHA,Lt Col (Retd) Hafeezullah Awan, MD WASA Quetta.
Major General (Retd) Shujaat Ali Khan, Ambassador to Morocco
Major General (Retd) Badruddin, Ambassador to Brunei
Vice Admiral(Retd) Khalid Mir, Ambassador to Lebanon
Brig (Retd) Muhammad Nisar, Ambassador to Argentina
Brig. Sikandar Ali, Director, Anti Narctics Force;Brig (R) Saeed Ahmad Rafi, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (He was inducted by Gen Musharraf into Foreign Service as incharge of overseas polling for Presidential Referendum in April)Brig (R) Mian Khalid Habib, Chief of Protocol, M/o foreign Affirs ,Brig Tipu Sultan, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,Group Capt (R) Khalid Aziz Babar, Director General, M/o Foreign Affairs,Naval Lt (R) Ghalib Iqbal, Consul General, Toronto (son-in-law of former Air Chief Anwar Shamim) {Anwer Shamim is a Quadiyani and had served General Zia, Anwer Shamim has huge ranches in California, USA , which he and his brother in Law Khursheed Anwer Mirza made through trafficking,Narcotics during so-called Afghan Jihad {the Time Weekly that carried this news was banned in Pakistan in 80s}.
Naval Lt (R) Qasim Raza Mutaqqi, Counsellor, Rome,Col (R) Salik Nawaz, Deputy Chief of Protocol, M/o Foreign Affairs ,Capt (R) Masood

Akhtar,Deputy Chief of Protocol, M/o Foreign Affairs,Capt (R) Shaukat Muqaddam,Counsellor , Dublin,Capt (R) Zaighamuddin Azam Khan, Counsellor, Berlin,Capt (R) Sohail Ittehad Hussain, Director General,M/o Foreign Affairs,Capt (R) Khalid Durrani, Director, M/o Foreign Affairs. General (R) Jahangeer Karamat, Ambassador of Pakistan in USA. Brigadier (R) Ejas Shah, Director General Intelligence Bureau.

In Kive (up to August 28, 2003), Vice-Admiral (retd) Khalid M. Mir was appointed ambassador in Beirut (up to July 2003), Lt-Gen (retd) Nasim Rana as ambassador in Kuala Lumpur (up to July 2003), Air Marshal (retd) Muhammad Farooq Qari as ambassad orin Tripoli, Lt-Gen (retd) Agha Jehangir Ali Khan as ambassador in Mexico, Maj-Gen(retd) Shujaat Ali Khan as ambassador in Rabat (up to September 2003), Maj-Gen (retd) Fazal Ghafoor as ambassador in Tashkent (contract expired on April 2002), Maj-Gen (retd) Salim Ullah as ambassador in Abu Dhabi (up to June 2003), Lt-Gen (retd) Mohammad Shafique as ambassador in Bahrain(contract expired on October 2002), Maj-Gen (retd) Muhammad Hassan Aqeel as ambassador in Thailand (up to June 2003), Maj Gen (retd) Syed Mustafa Anwar Hussain as ambassad or in Indonesia (up to August 2003) and Maj-Gen (retd) Sultan Habibas ambassador in DPR Korea (up to October 2003).Brigadier Abdul Majid Khan was appointedas ambassador in Dushambe (contract expired on June 2002), while Major Badruddin was posted as high commissioner to Bender Seri Begawen. In the cabinet division, Maj-Gen Khalid Bashir was appointed as Member (Tech) Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) (up to November 2001), Maj-Gen Raza Hussain as chairman SUPARCO and Maj-Gen Shahzada Alam Malik as Chairman PTA.

These inductions were made on regular basis. Similarly, in the ministry of communications, Maj-Gen Tariq Javed was inducted as National Highway Authority chairman on November 11, 2000 but was later repatriated. In his place Maj Gen Furrakh Javed was appointed as NHA chief on November 5, 2001 on a secondment basis He already had served as deputy director general (Dev) in the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Likewise, Maj-Gen (retd) Agha Masood Hasan was appointed as Director General Pakistan Post Office on a contract basis, Vice-Admiral Taj Muhammad Khattak was appointed as Chairman Port Qasim Authority (PQA) on secondment, Rear AdmiralMuhammad Asad Qureshi was appointed as Director General PQA, Vice Admiral (retd) S Tauquir H Naqvi as Chairman Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) on contract, Vice Admiral (retd) S. Abaid Ullah Khan as chairman (PNSC) (contract terminated on October, 2000), Rear Admiral Bakhat Ali Juman was appointed as Executive Director (Ship Management PNSC), Rear

Admiral (retd) Sarfraz Khan was appointed as Chairman Gwadar Port Authority(GPA),Rear Admiral Muhammad Nashat Raffi as General Manager Karachi Port Trust (KPT),Vice Admiral Ahmed Hayat was appointed on a contract basis as Chairman Karachi Port Trust (KPT), but prior to him Vice Admiral (retd) Khalid Mohammad Mir was serving as chairman. Maj Gen (retd) Mohsin Ahmed Vahidy was appointed as Executive Directive PNSC Karachi on a contract basis but he is not serving now, while Rear Admiral Sikandar Viqar Naqvi was appointed chairman PQA (notserving).Similarly,in the ministry of defence, Lt-Gen (retd) Hamid Nawaz Khan was re-employed on a contract basis as secretary ministry of defence but earlier Lt-Gen (retd) Nasim Rana was serving in this capacity whose contract was terminated on July 8, 2001. Rear Admiral Irfan Ahmad was appointed as Additional Secretary (contract terminated), then Maj-Gen Muhammad Ashraf Chaudhry was made Additional Secretary, defence ministry, on secondment basis. Maj-Gen Javed Iqbalwas appointed as Director General Military Land and Cantonments (ML&C) on secondment but he was later retired. Later, Maj Gen Muhammad Jawed was appointed as DG ML&C on secondment. Maj-Gen Mahboobul Muzaffar and Maj-Gen Sabihuddin Bokhari were appointed as Surveyor General of Pakistan. After their retirement, Maj-Gen Tariq Javed was appointed in their place on secondment basis. Rear Admiral Arshad Munir Ahmed was appointed Ex-Managing Director Karachi Shipyard (contract expired), Air vice Marshal S Javed Raza as Director Pre Engineering PIA, AVM (retd) Niaz Hussain Director (Engineering) PIA and AVM Arshad Rashid Sethi as Deputy Director General, CAA (not working).. In the Defence Production Division, Air Marshal (retd) Zahid Anis was appointed as secretary D P Division. Earlier Lt-Gen (retd) Lehrasab was working in his place. Similarly, Maj-Gen Ali Baz was appointed as Additional Secretary D P Division. Earlier, Maj-Gen Rehmat Khan was serving as Additional Secretary D P Division. Maj-Gen M Salimuddin was re-employed after his retirement from the army as Chief Scientists and Scientific Adviser DESTO in place of Maj-Gen Akbar Saeed Awan, while Maj-Gen Syed Ali Hamid was appointed as Director General DEPO on secondment basis while AVM Aurangzeb Khan was appointed Chairman Pakistan Aeronautical Complex board, Kamra. In the Establishment Division,Maj- Gen (retd) Rahmatullah was appointed as Managing Director Federal Employees Benevolent Fund and Group Insurance. Earlier, Maj-Gen (retd) Inayatullah Khan Niazi was working in his place. Air Marshal (retd) Shafique Haider was appointed as Chairman Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) while Lt-Gen (retd) Arshad Hussain was appointed Member, FPSC.Maj-Gen (retd) Sikander Shami was appointed as Director General of Head of Institute of NIPA, Lahore, while Lt-Gen (retd) Sardar Ali as Director NIPA, Lahore, both on a contract basis. Maj-Gen Muhammad Iqbal Khan was appointedas

Managing Director PASSCO on contract in the ministry of food, agriculture and livestock, Maj-Gen Ahsan Ahmad as Director General health on secondment but was replaced by Maj-Gen (retd) Muhammad Aslam also on secondment/contract in the health ministry.In the interior ministry Maj-Gen (retd) Zahid Ehsan was appointed as Chairman Nadra (posted out) while in the ministry of industries and production Maj-Gen (retd) M. Mohsin was appointed as chairman NFC (national finance commission) on contract. AVM Azhar Maud was appointed National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) chairman.In the ministry of information and broadcasting Maj-Gen (retd) Jamshed Ayaz Khan was appointed as president Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, on contract. In the minorities, culture, sports, Maj-Gen (retd) Inayat Ullah Khan Niazi was appointed Chairman ETPB (contract expired), while Maj-Gen Anis Ahmad Bajwa was appointed as Managing Director PTDC Islamabad on contract. He had already served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Chief Executive in the Prime Minister's secretariat. Lt-Gen Hamid Javed was appointed as Chief of Staff to the President in the president's secretariat. Similarly in the Prime Minister's secretariat Lt-Gen Ghulam Ahmad was appointed as chief of staff to Chief Executive in place of Lt-Gen Hamid Javed. Maj-Gen Abdul Jabbar Bhatti, Maj-Gen Shafaatullah Shah and Maj-Gen Muhammad Yousaf were also appointed as deputy chief of staff to chief executive. Maj-Gen Haroon Sikandar Pasha was appointed as Director Chief Executive's secretariat. Maj-Gen Nadeem Taj had also served as Military Secretary (MS) to Chief Executive (posted as MS to the president from January 2002). Lt-Gen Khalid Maqbool (now Governor Punjab) and Lt-Gen Syed Muhammad Amjad were appointed as Chairm an National Accountability Bureau (NAB), while Maj-Gen Abdul Jabbar Bhatti, Maj-Gen Ijaz Ahmed Bakhshi and Maj-Gen Ovais Mushtaq Qureshi, AVM (retd) M Saleemud Din, Maj-Gen Muhammad Sabir, Maj-Gen Nazakat Ali Khan, Maj-Gen Shujaat Zamir Dar, Maj-Gen Syed Usman Shah and Maj-Gen Tariq Bashir, Rear Admiral Ihsanul Haq, Real Admiral Ubaid Sadiq, AVM Masood Akhtar, AVM Zakaullah Khan and AVM (retd) Khuda Dad were subsequently appointed as Director General, NAB Maj-Gen (retd) Syed Asif Riaz Bokhari was appointed as Member, NRB on a contract basis.Maj-Gen Parvez Akmal was appointed as Managing Director Oil and Gas Development Company (OGDC) (not working) while Maj-Gen (retd) Syed Usman Shah was appointed as Director General Intelligence and Investigation. In the railways ministry Lt-Gen (retd) Javaid Ashraf Qazi was appointed as secretary/chairman Pakistan Railways. After his contract was terminated Lt-Gen (retd) Saeeduz Zafar replaced him. On termination of his contract, Maj-Gen (retd) Hamid Hassan Butt was appointed as General Manager M & SPR but his contract too was terminated. Lt-en(retd) ZulfiqarAli Khan was appointed as WAPDA Chairman on secondment/contract while Maj-Gen

(retd) M Aslam Zuberi was appointed Adviser in the Wafaqi Mohtasib secretariat (contract expired).

A close examination will show that almost all civilian institutions are headed by senior army officers from the rank of Generals down the line to Lieutenants. These institutions are: communication, education, diplomatic sector, power sector, information, post offices, local bodies, think tanks, industrial production, shipping, minority affairs, population, welfare, health, agriculture, railways, housing, highways, labour and manpower, social and human development, law and justice, sports (cricket to hockey). A rundown of the structure shows that the army officers have held 13 posts in Cabinet Division, 5 in Commerce Ministry, 58 in Communication, 113 in Defence Division, 52 in defence Production, 9 in Education Ministry, 16 in Establishment Division, 24 in Foreign Ministry, 6 in Food and Agriculture Ministry, 88 in Home Ministry, 29 in Production and Industry Ministry, 58 in Information Technology, 25 in Kashmir Affairs Ministry, 17 in Minority Affairs Ministry, 39 in Petroleum and Natural Resources Ministry, 21 in Science and Technology Ministry, 72 in Railway Ministry and Railway Board, and 37 in Power and Water Resource Ministry. In addition 37 officers are provided position from 10 per quota reserved for retired military officers.

13 Generals and Lt. Generals are holding ambassadorial posts in different countries. A good number of retired military officers are appointed in civilian establishments on contract basis. Further examination reveals that a large number of military men are appointed in police as military officers. The entire civil society has been kept in a straight jacket by posting military officers on all sensitive positions from top to bottom. A two pronged strategy has been adopted to run the administration. On the one hand repeatedly power is usurped and on the other hand political leaders and dissenters are subjected to repression by dragging them to the Accountability Commission. This Commission is also staffed with military men. In other words, all are accountable to the military establishment and the military establishment is accountable to nobody. This is why it is said that every country has an army but Pakistani army has a country.

17 Dec-2007

Is the gun our friend or foe?

Like a good physician, a political leader keeps a constant watch over his people. He makes prescriptions according to the changing mood of the people as does the physician prescribe according to Health State of his patient.

When a nation begins its struggle for realization of its rights, the leadership takes full care that the people are made to make as little sacrifice as is possible. If the objectives are not realized through civil disobedience, then the prescription for political struggle can be changed. In 1918, Gandhiji had launched the struggle against the colonial power. A crowd in Calcutta got enraged and set a police station on fire in which a few Englishmen and some local police personnel were killed. Gandhiji immediately stopped his movement saying that he would not place the foundation of his freedom movement on the blood of innocent people. He knew that a violent movement would consume the lives of millions of people.

Unfortunately, pseudo-leadership leads the people in Kashmir. It is neither able to diagnose the disease nor prescribe a proper remedy. Their prescription at the moment is violence and the use of gun, which serves the interests of many actors on the scene. They do not mind if the patient dies by inches just for the improper treatment meted out to him. In a struggle of violence when weapons are used, one with larger resources, weaponry, manpower and better technology has the upper hand. However, in some cases, the world opinion did help the weaker struggling nations to achieve their goal as in Vietnam and in Afghanistan. The truth is that at both the places, the real fighting was between two super powers of the day, the USA and the erstwhile Soviet Union.

What has the gun given to Kashmir's?

The gun has brought an end to the culture of coexistence in Kashmir

society.It has exacerbated extremism and sown the seeds of communalism secular polity has been devoured by the monster of communalism. The gun has consumed the generation of Kashmiri youth in streets and market places, in mountains and gorges, in streams and over glaciers. Thousands of young women have been widowed and thousands of children have been rendered orphans. The gun has actually strengthened the criminal elements in society. Family feuds and personal

vendetta are being settled through the use of gun. On the basis of gun, properties have been acquired forcibly and declared the act as legal and permissible. The weapon is being used for petty purposes and interests to the extent that under the fear of gun, matrimonial relations have been imposed upon unwilling partners. The gun has destroyed all such institutions as are essential infrastructure for the social and cultural development of a society like the schools, colleges, hospitals, bridges and other structures. The gun has closed the path to reason and found a short cut to the resolution of political differences by liquidating the political opponents. This difference of opinion has consumed many a distinguished scholar, intellectual, physician, and many others whom the society finds after centuries of waiting and expectation. What a tragedy that this enormous national treasure has been reduced to dust by the gun.

Take whatever dimension of Kashmir politics during the last one decade, you will find that violence and gun culture have spread nothing but wholesale destruction of Kashmir and the new generation of Kashmir's. Indian and Pakistani armies both claim to be the friends of Kashmir's while painting each other as the enemy of the Kashmir's. But when both of them play with ammunition and gunfire on the line of control, it is only the Kashmir's who get destroyed, their houses are razed to ground, and their cattle are killed. Their fields are turned into ruins and their crops are set on fire. Thus Kashmir's become the targets of the bullet of both the armies. A closer study reveals that while Pakistani army supplies guns to the Kashmir's thus contriving his death, the Indian army guns him down while trying to disarm him. Kashmiri leadership has become a hostage to this death drama of Kashmir's. Of course, while sitting in closed-door rooms, these leaders condemn the gun and call the violence as poison for political process.

Every conscientious person is aware that killing any person on the basis of his political differences is in fact the butchering of the concept of political opposition. This in fact is the death of political evolution. Activists of National Conference are being killed on the basis of difference in

political views. If this is the practice then what can stop National Conference activists meting out the same treatment to their political opponents? We know of such reprisals enacted by JKLF and Hizbul Mujahedeen groups some time back. This is what took place between the activists of Hizbul Mujahedeen and Kuka Parry group also. Today the renegades are being butchered and they respond in the same manner. How unfortunate that the entire Kashmiri nation is engaged in a fratricidal killing. We know of no other community that is so seriously engaged in destroying its own generation. If the tempo of this fratricide continues, what will be the end result for the Kashmiri nation? Where shall we find succor for our orphans and where shall we find suitable matches for our young girls of marriageable age? What will happen to our progeny?. And then the million dollar question shall remain, viz. the purpose for which we had taken up the gun, did we achieve it? Have we achieved even ten per cent of our goal? Have we made any progress in making Kashmir part of Pakistan or independent? To what extent have we been able to mould world opinion in support of our cause? The simple answer to all these questions is a big NO.

On the ground

The ground reality is that a decade of unrelenting violence has rent asunder the fabric of our society and polity. Today we stand divided on ideological basis. Violence has rapidly increased the number of our graveyards, our widows and orphans. External elements have been provided full freedom to interfere in our affairs and matters. Today we are more than 85 per cent in the control of these external elements. Our economy has shattered. Educational institutions have seen decline and downfall. Ignorant elements deliver life threats to the honest journalists for saying the truth. In other words those leaders and political entrepreneurs claim to be the upholders of the birth right of Kashmir's, namely the right to self-determination, are not ready to allow the Kashmir's to speak the truth. Thus the permanent victims of gun and brutalities today in Kashmir are the youth and the truth.

Calls for strike

Day in and day out, calls for hartals and strikes are given, The pseudo-leaders consider these calls and their results as a symbol of their power and strength although they knew it better than anybody else that these strikes are observed only out of fear of gun and not out of any sincere sentiment. A common Kashmiri is fed up with these calls and strikes. This is what could be gathered from the speech made by Yasin Malik, which

he made at the grave of the martyrs after being released from the jail. He said," people should take note talking of peace and peace alone, the outside world gets a wrong signal." This means that ordinary people were now talking of peace only. Many years ago, I had advised the Kashmiri leadership to put only that they can carry much of burden on the shoulders of the people as without distress. If the people get the impression that they could not get anything in return of immense sacrifices they have made, then they would get disappointed and distance themselves from the struggle. This is precisely what is happening today. More than 35 thousand Kashmiri young boys and girls have migrated to other parts of India to receive education and training for career making. There are many chances that the Indians will benefit from this special manpower in final analysis.

International public opinion

Human Rights Commission holds its meetings at Geneva twice a year. For last ten years, India and Pakistan along with some Kashmir's on either side have been trading accusations of human rights violations against each other. Till date the UN did not appoint a Commission that would conduct inquiry into these allegations. The OIC raised hue and cry that in Indian part of Kashmir, the Indians subjected Kashmiri Muslims to repression. But with the passing of each day, these OIC member countries increased the quantum of their trade with India. Larger and larger labour force from India is coming to these countries and helping the home country with foreign exchange remittances. Thus India's economy is receiving a boost through it. After Kargil fighting, India made it known to the whole world that whatever is happening in Kashmir is because of Pakistan's interference. The world was convinced with India's allegation of "cross-border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan." The pressure mounted on Pakistan by world opinion in the matter of Kargil shows that India had succeeded in making them concede what she had been alleging against Pakistan.

Hijacking of an Indian airliner from Nepal by Kashmir related militants gave another handle in the hands of the Indians to tell the world that Pakistan was interfering in their matters and exporting terrorism in the country. Three persons set free against the released of the passengers went to Pakistan.

Track II

In today's international political strategy, most of the matters are

discussed under Track II dispensation. It means discussing in closed-door meetings on informal levels but with formal recognition. India has a host of evidences to prove that Pakistan is sending foreign Militants to fight in Kashmir and that she is providing training facilities to Kashmiri militants for "terrorist and subversive" acts. The world has not only accepted this stand of India but has turned a blind eye to the use of excessive force by Indian security forces to quell the movement in Kashmir. Of course, occasionally the Amnesty International or some other human rights organizations may speak a word or two to assuage the hurt feelings of the

Kashmir's. However, India has been able to convince the world that human rights violations in Kashmir might occasionally take place because of the use of gun and the cross firing that follows it. When an infiltrator from the other side of the line of control seeks shelter in some house, the security forces arrest them. In the course of this action also some innocent people get killed because there is firing on both the sides. In short on international level, it is confirmed that international opinion cannot be smoothened in favour of Kashmir struggle because of the indiscriminate violence to which the militants have resorted.

Might of the State

The world endorses the principle that those using the gun to get their demands accepted should be met with the full might of the state. All countries in the world apply this principle. In 1954-55, Pakistan, resorting to this option, brutally suppressed the rebellion in POK. The Punjab Constabulary blasted private house with detonators. Should I venture to write in detail about this event, readers may attribute it to my bias. As such, I shall refer to Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan's book titled" *Muqaddima Kashmir,"* published by Jung Publishers in 1987 for the first time. Three or four times the President of PoK, Sardar Qayyum is an ardent supporter of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. He writes as this (pages 110 - 111): " *The entire area was given in the control of army. There was exchange of fire between the army and the rebels in Rawlakot, Barel and Palandhari and people on both sides got killed. Punjab Constabulary was deployed. The repression unleashed by this force on our people is too horrendous to recount. They indulged in misbehaviour and excesses to the farthest limit. In the bazaars of Palandhari, they put ropes in the necks of many an honourable citizen and dragged them along the streets like cattle. They would order their captives to give out a dog's bark or a cat's mew. Then they were subjected to lashing. They huddled no fewer than fifty persons in one prison cell normally made for one prisoner. They left no stone unturned to oppress and tyrannise the*

people". Sardar Qayyum writes:

"The policemen would suspend a whip on a pole along the pathway and then order the people to salute it. This was one way of humiliating the people. They would under orders assemble the people in the locality and then make them hold their ear lobes. They were allowed to go back to their homes after dusk many people had to pawn their cattle and even their womenfolk to raise funds to pay the land tax. In many cases the taxes were realized for the fourth or fifth time because each revenue officer would want to realize it during his tenure."

Clinton's visit

President Clinton's South Asian visit generated hope among the Kashmiri people. Some of the Kashmiri leaders even thought of fixing a meeting with President Clinton. They were heard saying that if India did not obstruct, the meeting had almost been fixed. This speaks for classical innocence of Kashmiri leadership. International protocol lay down that if the head of a state visits another state, nobody could stop even the staunchest of that state's opponent from meeting the visit dignitary. Clinton did make a formal reference to Kashmir, which meant nothing. But of course, addressing the people of Pakistan on TV during his stopover, he exhorted them to give up violence and come out of the siege of Kashmir issue. The way in which President Clinton changed his airliner while landing in Pakistan gave a clear signal to the world that Pakistan was involved in the politics of terrorism. Nobody was left with any doubt about it.

Those who do not try to understand international politics and those who do not see beyond the veil of human rights of western countries, they will not be able to know where the interests of these countries lie. An American Congressman said on TV that India talks business with the US while Pakistan talks of Kashmir. The US must decide in the light of her interests. This is what not only the Asian but also the people all over the world need to understand. Western countries care for their interests. That has been their policy in the past and shall remain in future as well.

Religious extremism

Religious extremism has engulfed the entire world. There is bloodshed in Algeria. There is terrorism in Egypt. There is fighting in Chechnya. There s talk about Osma bin Laden. There is the question violence in Kashmir and the Philippines. There has been the New York Trade Fair bomb blast.

In all these incidents, there is reported to be the hand of religious extremists groups. The activities of religious extremists have brought a bad name to the Muslims all over the world. The impression everywhere is that Muslims are extremists. It is regrettable that a religion like Islam that teaches peace and which literally means peace should be tarnished by the unbecoming acts of the militants among the followers of this faith. How then can a common Muslim accept that these people are fighting a war for Islam? Moreover when we say that Islam is the second largest religion in the world, the question is what and where is the threat for Islam? Are these so called Islamic fighters bringing anything but death and destruction to Muslims? More than 65 per cent of the total drugs produced in the world are produced in Afghanistan. But the rulers there claim to have established an Islamic theocratic regime. How can one convince the world that Afghanistan is an Islamic state? What type of Islamic State is it when it brings death to the entire world in the shape of drugs?

During Yeltsin's president ship, Chechnya got autonomy and they chose their own President. They should have rebuilt their country, provided educational facilities to the people and worked towards their upliftment. They should have entered the computer age and become rivals of the Russians. But instead of this they blasted bombs in Moscow, or kidnapped the Russians in buses. The result was their total destruction. Russia razed it to the ground. In Algeria and Egypt, the Islamists mercilessly butchered their own men in buses, cars, on the roads and in houses. Bombs were planted which shattered buildings and cut people into pieces. What did the terrorists gain from it? What did the Muslims get from unleashing killing and loot and arson in Somalia? In Pakistan Shia-Sunni sectarian conflict consumed innocent lives in mosques, Imam Bargahs, market places and in crowded places.

India is let off the hook

Violence and gun unleashed by the militancy give a free hand to India to perpetrate oppression. The proliferation of gun goes in favour of India. In the first place, India finds vast training field for its forces in guerrilla warfare in Kashmir. Like Afghans, no country in the world is prepared to provide political or military support to the Kashmiris. The arms supplied by Pakistan are of light caliber, which can be countered by India easily. India can continue with this type of conflict for a century. She has no dearth of manpower not of weaponry. The arms and ammunition seized by India from the militants in Kashmir can equip one full Brigade. The gun has given the Indians a clear opportunity of liquidating Kashmiri youth after

arresting them on charges of colluding with militants. The security forces of the land where Ram and Sita and Gandhiji preached the lesson of non-violence learnt for the first time in Kashmir that they had a license to kill human beings and humanism. The outside world is a silent spectator to all this because there are vested interests.

Pakistan's role

Pakistan has helped its people and nation to come to the brink of insolvency. Her military rulers and intelligence agencies have anchored their existence on fomented enmity against India. Entire Pakistani nation has been made a hostage to this scenario. No institution in Pakistan is safe from the jackboot of neither military nor it ever. So much so that even the Supreme Court too has been made hostage to the whims and wishes of the military dictators. Be it the verdict of Justice Munir in favour of Governor Ghulam Mohammad and against democracy or be it the verdict of "necessity" by Justice Anwarul Huqq during the regime of Zia, or be it the recent decision of the Supreme Court on the seizure of power by General Musharraf, the institutions of justice have always submitted to the power of the gun. Is it not unfortunate that the Supreme Court has given the military ruler a right to rule for three years and has thereby given the military rule the legal support for dismissal on October 12, 1999 of a democratically elected government? What is more, a gun wielding military man can now change the constitution unanimously framed during Z.A. Bhutto's regime. Like this is not to found anywhere in the world.

There have been rebellions. People in power have been assassinated. Constitutions have been abrogated. But the judiciary has seldom legitimized oppression. The question is how can Pakistani institutions speak of justice before her military rulers? The former Law Minister in Nawaz Sharif government namely Khalid Anwar was presenting the case against military intervention in the writ petition against the dismissal of Mian Sahib. He said that the army was the most corrupt institution in the country. He said that all the institutions in the country together spend nearly 69 billion rupees while as the army alone spends145 billion rupees.

The Chief Executive remains outside the purview of *Ehtesab* of accountability. In this way, Pakistani army has found only one source to sustain itself on this huge expenditure and that is the Kashmir issue. How then can Pakistani army wish that Kashmir issue be resolved? If the Indian army is shelling from the control line and thus killing the people in PoK, why does the Pakistani army return fire when it know that only Kashmiris will be killed as a retaliatory action? Why don't they shell the

border villages in Punjab and Rajasthan so that not Kashmiris but Indians would be among the killed? The politics of gun is a necessity with Pakistan army. Likewise Indian security forces and some Indian extremist politicians to find a necessity in continuing the policy of gun because the Indian security forces have found a training field in Kashmir. But have the Kashmiris and their leadership ever tried to ask what did they get out of this gun?. The answer is that they get nothing but death and destruction.

Further division of Kashmir

Hurriyat Chairman Mr. Geelani has proposed further trifurcating of Kashmir. In truth he has not committed a crime by making such a statement. Jamaat-e-Islami never made a secret of the fact that it has been fighting for Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. According to Pakistan's plan called Operation Topic, the aim is to acquire Kashmir Valley. Will further division of Kashmir resolve the tangle? No, it can never happen. Therefore the only solution for Kashmir issue is that both India and Pakistan allow Kashmir to be united and Jammu and Kashmir becomes a secular state giving internal autonomy to all regions of which it is comprised.

Offer for talks

The release of Hurriyat leaders from the Indian prisons created the worldwide impression that India is talking to the people. Some of them are reported to have secret talks also. A 100-minute secret meeting was held in the private residence of the Kashmir University Vice Chancellor between a senior Hurriyat leader and the Indian Defence Minister. But at the same time the APHC has put the entire Kashmiri nation into confusion in regard to their talks with the Government of India. The State Department of the US has appreciated India's initiative of talking to the Hurriyat leaders. Pakistani leaders have expressed their indifference to these talks thereby adding to the confusion of Hurriyat. It is out of this confusion and chaos that the Hurriyat has demanded tripartite talks. From this the entire world community got a signal that by demanding inclusion of Pakistan in the talks, Hurriyat is performing the role of a supporter of Pakistan.

The question is not that APHC has made any wrong demand because Pakistan is a party to Kashmir dispute because she has occupied Gilgit, Baltistan and PoK. The question is that in the context of Indian part of Kashmir, talks will take place between India and the Kashmiris on that side. Pakistan joining the talks at a certain stage is but natural. But why

should Kashmiri leaders advocate the case of Pakistan? Therefore the demand of the Hurriyat betrays lack of political sagacity. At the same time, why should not Pakistan offer the PoK leadership to talk with Islamabad as is done by the Indian government? If India gives Hurriyat leaders to meet anybody including the Pakistani High Commissioner in New Delhi, why should not Pakistan given the same freedom to PoK dissidents to meet the Indian High commissioner in Islamabad?

If there is no gun?

Kashmir and Kashmiri leadership should immediately reject the politics of gun. Not only that, they should declare gun as the enemy number one of Kashmiris. They should declare that the gun and violence are the worst enemies of their movement. They should adopt the path of non-violence as their line of action to bring them to their cherished goal. Yasin Malik and his colleagues have presented an example to this effect in recent days. When the Kashmiri nation rejects gun and gun politics in letter and in spirit, then the only sources responsible for violence in Kashmir would be the Indian and Pakistani forces. Kashmiri youth will no more be victimised for border crossing, arrest for alleged gun running and of custodial killings. But in civil disobedience scenario, killing of innocent and unarmed people will strengthen international opinion in favour of Kashmir's. Indian rulers will not more find an excuse to tell her people and the world at large that she is obliged to fight terrorism in Kashmir. This will also bring to an end the business of those who are making fast buck from gun diplomacy. Any oppression or repression against the journalists will go into the account of Indian or Pakistani forces or renegades. At the top of it, Kashmiri intellectuals will find space and confidence to write the truth and convey it to the people. Those who have left Kashmir will find opportunity conducive for returning to their places of origin. Kashmiri nation will not be tarnished for alleged murders on the basis of political differences and more women and girls of our land will be saved from becoming widows and orphans. No more graves will have to be dug for the Kashmiri youth.

The last thing that I think I have a right to say in the capacity of the son of the soil. The pain that has accumulated within my breast for Kashmir and Kashmir's is that Kashmiri leadership should try to realize the pain and suffering of a common Kashmiri. The pain inflicted by a prospect of arrest or by becoming a victim of terrorism or getting killed in the process. The pain that is inflicted by the dark prison cell turns the black nights into a monster. They should realize the pain suffered by a widow who is obliged to look after the orphans. They should realize what it means to the young

generation of Kashmir's who find nothing to sustain them. They should realize what happens to the parents of those dear ones who have been put to eternal sleep in their graves. This all is beckoning them to play the role of an efficient physician, diagnose the disease and make the proper prescription. The prescription of gun has brought the Kashmiri nation to the brink of disaster. This is the time that strategy should be changed keeping in view the ground realities. This is the time that non-violent movement is given a chance. This is my appeal to the leadership and I hope they will listen.

01Jan-2008

Benazir and Pakistan after Benazir?

Politics came to Benazir, the daughter of Zulfiqar Bhutto, as legacy at a very difficult time. But on account of her long struggle, Benazir endeared herself as an outstanding political leader not only in Pakistan but also in South Asia. In Pakistan civil and military establishment strive to keep political leaders at an arm's length from political struggle. They create walls of doubts and suspicions around them in order to keep them away from political struggle. The bare fact that a woman like Benazir could fight odds enumerated above, and rises to the position of Prime Minister of the country not once but twice through general elections, is a proof of her being a matured statesman and political activist.

The story of Benazir will remain incomplete as long as we do not care to know about the struggle of Peoples Party and its founder Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Zulfiqar's father Shahnawaz Bhutto had migrated from a small village in Haryana to Gari Khuda Bakhsh in Larkana before the partition of India. Zulfiqar inherited politics from his father. During the administration of Ayub Khan, he rose to the position of foreign minister of Pakistan. After Tashkent Agreement of 1965, he developed differences with Ayub Khan. He resigned as foreign minister of Pakistan and incepted a new political party by the name of Pakistan Peoples' Party.

Many Pakistani intellectuals of the day like Mahmud Ali Qasuri, Dr. Mubashar Hassan, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, Etezaz Hassan and others were among its founding fathers. The party spoke for the oppressed poor people of Pakistan. It raised the slogan of food, clothing and housing for the poor. In the general elections of 1970, it won with a landslide victory in Punjab and Sindh. In NWFP and Baluchistan, Khan Wali Khan of Awami National Party and the father of Maulana Fazlu'r-Rahman won the election. In East Pakistan, the Awami League of Sheikh Mujibu'r-Rahman won with a landslide victory.

Unfortunately, the military ruler of the time, General Yahya Khan, did not allow political dialogue among the leaders to succeed. He ordered military operation in East Pakistan and thereby contrived the genocide of poor people of East Pakistan. While promulgating martial law, it was decided to destroy all civilian habitations within a radius of three miles in an area where resistance would be made to military rule. International observers and human rights organizations accused Pakistani military of raping more than 200,000 Bengali women during the operations. An NGO in Bangladesh is working for the rehabilitation of these victimised women. East Pakistanis initiated liberation movement and India gave them full support. On December 3, 1971, after fighting for 13 days in East Pakistan, nearly 90 thousand Pakistani soldiers surrendered to the Indian army and thus Bangladesh came into existence.

Zulfiqar Bhutto took in his hands the reins of a collapsed Pakistan. As a result of the Shimla Agreement, he secured the release of ninety thousand prisoners of war and addressed the reconstruction of Pakistan. He obtained support from Libya and other Arab countries to make Pakistan an atomic power. He laid the foundation of making Pakistan an atomic power. An atomic centre was created in Kahuta. The US did not like it and Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State, asked Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to stop his atomic programme. On declining to oblige, Kissinger issued a warning saying that the US would make world take a lesson from what the US was going to do with Pakistan.

In 1977, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was ousted by the person whom he had made the Chief of Army Staff. Zia put him under arrest and prosecuted him for the murder of a colleague of his father. Nine judges of the Pakistan Supreme Court heard the case against Zulfiqar. Two of them were retired. Out of remaining seven judges four endorsed his death sentence and the remaining two exonerated him. Thereafter all the seven judges of the Supreme Court jointly advised Chief Martial Law Administrator and President Ziaul Haq to convert the death sentence into life imprisonment. But the saying goes that there is one noose and two necks, meaning that either Bhutto had to go or Zia had to go. Bhutto was hanged in Rawalpindi jail. Later on the jail building too was demolished so that it does not become the mausoleum of martyred Bhutto.

Zulfiqar's two sons, Shahnawaz and Murtaza left for Afghanistan where they formed an organization named Al-Zulfiqar. It started bomb blasts in Pakistan. A high jacking incident also took place and 50 PPP activists were released in exchange. This movement failed miserably because in a war against the Soviet Union, Pakistan emerged as the frontline state.

The US and the Muslim countries in tandem, initiated a struggle against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The US and Pakistan jointly declared jihad against Russia. Osama bin Laden is the product of that era: Shahnawaz was found dead in a flat in France in 1985. In 1990s Murtaza returned to Pakistan. He was gunned down in an encounter with the police in Karachi .His sister Benazir happened to be the Prime Minister of Pakistan at that time.Benazir managed PPP independently of her brothers. After suffering incarceration during the tenure of Ziaul Haq, she was sent on exile. Afghanistan's war against Russia came to an end and Benazir returned to Pakistan in 1988. Zia was killed in an air crash and elections were held in Pakistan. PPP polled majority of votes and Benazir was elected Prime Minister. However, she was dismissed within two years and was thrown behind bars intermittently.

PPP won the general election in 1993 and Benazir was elected Prime Minister for the second time. But the enemies of democracy in Pakistan again hatched a conspiracy. In 1996 Benazir was removed from office as a result of alleged charges of corruption. Cases of corruption and bribery were lodged in the court against her and her husband As if Ali Zadora. Benazir remained in exile for eight years. Her husband Asif Zardari continued to remain behind the bars and suffered incarceration.

In the elections of 2002, though Benazir was in exile, her PPP got as many seats as would enable it to form a coalition government. But Musharraf broke the Muslim League and created Muslim League (Q) and helped it to come to power because the elections were held under the management of the Army. Democratic arrangement could not be strengthened or stabilized once again in Pakistan because the US roped in Pakistan under Musharraf's rule for its fight against terrorism in post 9/11 events. An impression was created in the whole world that while on one hand the US claimed to be bringing democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan, yet on the other hand it was giving outright support to a dictator in Pakistan.

Under internal and external pressure the US forged an understanding between Musharraf and Benazir following the dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Chowdhury of Pakistan and the emergence of a civil disobedience movement. Benazir's adversaries called this understanding a deal. But Benazir had herself clarified that her talks with Musharraf encompassed devolution of power to civil institutions, giving up military uniform by Musharraf and holding fair elections.

Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan in October. Suicide attacks were made in her reception celebrations which took a toll of 200 innocent lives.

Benazir accused ISI and Muslim League (Q) for the bomb attacks though the regime brought the onus to the doorsteps of the terrorists and in particular Al-Qaeda. Real culprits have not so far been identified or brought to book. In the meanwhile 8 January was fixed as the date for elections. Benazir repeatedly asked for upgrading of her security cover, to which the regime did not respond. Opponents of Benazir in Pakistan had accused her of forging an understanding with the US in order to return to Pakistan. This led to anti-American majority in Pakistan look upon Benazir with suspicion. However, in her public rallies she repeatedly said that she had returned to Pakistan to reinstate democracy. At last, struggling for restoration of democracy, Benazir attained martyrdom in the Liaqat Bagh in Rawalpindi. On this very ground, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaqat Ali Khan had been martyred many years ago. His assailants remain untraced till date. Pakistani regime was quick to hold Baitullah Masud, an Al Qaeda activist responsible for the assassination of Benazir. Some unidentified news agency had sent an email to bring the accusation against Masud. Pakistani regime cashed it and pointed the finger of accusation towards Al Qaeda. But PPP leaders and the husband of Benazir dismissed this stand of Pakistani regime. Al Qaeda not only declined to have any hand in the matter but also condemned it saying that killing women was not their tradition. Then Pakistani official circles circulated the canard of the lever of the vehicle in which Benazir was riding as the cause of her fatal head injury. The site of accident besmeared with blood was washed clean immediately.

The question is who is likely to derive benefit from this situation. Nawaz Sharif has been debilitated of fighting election. Benazir and PPP were the only prospective party to hold the reins of power. The military regime in combination with Muslim League (Q) has been holding power for last seven years. Military regime has controlled all economic and civil institutions of Pakistan. Benazir would have to struggle to see to it that the military regime or Muslim League (Q) did not continue their control on civil institutions. It will be recalled that despite Benazir becoming Prime Minister twice, she was unable to enter the Kahuta nuclear complex even once. The military regime openly called her a security risk for Pakistan.

It is a matter of pride for me to have been in various Pakistani jails along with some most outstanding martyrs, patriots and leaders of that country like Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Nawab Akbar Bugti, Muhammad Mari, Kahn Abdul Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal and Ghaus Bakhsh Bizanjo. During 1971 war I was lodged in Mianwali jail where Sheikh Mujibur Rahman occupied the adjacent cell and I used to talk to him occasionally.

Killing of Benazir is in fact the killing of democratic forces in Pakistan. The

danger of breaking the federation is heightened by the assassination of Benazir. Armed struggle against Pakistan is already in place in Baluchistan. Baluch political leaders are either sent away in exile or got killed by the troops. Nawab Akbar Bugti and his son were martyred in 2007. Taliban and Al Qaeda are fighting against Pakistan Army in NWFP. That struggle can easily formulate into Pukhtun nationalist movement to make Pukhtunistan a reality. Sindh is already considered a fief of Punjabis and the Sindis have a feeling that the Punjabis are treating them as slaves. Pakistani Generals, Brigadiers and Colonels are rewarded for their "bravery" with fiefs and landed holdings in Sindh. From Bhutto house, Zulfiqar was hanged in Punjab. His one son was poisoned. His second son Murtaza was martyred by the police and Benazir too was assassinated in Punjab. Sindis hold Pakistan Army responsible for all these killings and the Pakistan Army has a majority of Punjabis in its ranks. Somebody had foretold the assassination of Benazir owing to inadequate security cover provided by Musharraf. The clue to her killing will never come to fore in Pakistan. Soon after the creation of Pakistan, the enemies of democracy kept Pakistan distanced from a democratic structure. It is a common saying in Pakistan that country rewards her benefactors with either sending them to gallows or exiling them from the country.

This is true, right from the founder of Pakistan, namely Muhammad Ali Jinnah (Qaid-e –Azam) down to Benazir Bhutto. It is explained like this: Quaid-e-Azam made Pakistan. When he fell ill, a broken ambulance was sent to the airport to bring him to the hospital. The vehicle broke down several times on its way to the hospital, and Quaid-e-Azam breathed his last. Liaqat Ali Khan established democracy and he was shot dead. Zulfiqar Bhutto tried to salvage something from the defeated and debilitated Pakistan and raise it to the status of an atomic power, was sent to the gallows and both of his sons were murdered. Nawaz Sharief conducted nuclear test and he was sent on exile. Qadeer Khan brought Pakistan's atomic programme to completion and he was humiliated by the Army at the behest of the US. Benazir had given a new hope and expectation to Pakistan and promised to start new voyage along the path of democracy, she too was assassinated in a brutal manner. Today Pakistani regime is bringing accusation of Benazir's assassination to the doorsteps of Al Qaeda. The question arises was Al Qaeda also responsible for other murders. There are no two opinions about the truth that all these grave criminal acts are the handiwork of those who do not want to see the sunrise of democracy in the country.

Benazir is no more with us today. But this Daughter of the East remains immortal. Her struggle will remain a beacon of light to those who become

leaders on the basis of inheritance but do not have any talent other than being the descendant of a politically prominent family. This Daughter of the East had said in one of her interviews that "you would not be remembered tomorrow for how many cars you had, how many houses you own and how much wealth you possess. If anybody remembers you he will do so by accounting for the struggle which you have made for the masses of the people and the service, which you render to your country in lifting the people out of poverty, ignorance and domination. Despite being the richest women, this Daughter of the East lived for the masses of people and became a martyr in securing the rights of the people and democracy. If we call her a Martyr for Democracy this would be a befitting homage to her memory.

Elections previously scheduled for 8 January 2008 in Pakistan have been deferred although PPP and Nawaz Sharif insisted that elections be held according to schedule. Military regime and Muslim League (Q) avoided. The new date has been fixed for 18 February. It is possible that the Army might impose martial law and General Kiyani might assume power. It is a tradition with Pakistan that the COAS stages a coup against the very authority that has brought him to the top. If elections take place, then PPP and the party of Nawaz Sharif together can bring a motion of impeachment against Musharraf and remove him from office of President.

Benazir's assassination will at least be a lesson for Pakistani leaders and political parties that although she had serious threats from the terrorists and the military regime, yet she did not give up her struggle for democracy till she made a sacrifice of her life.

In Kashmir, our political leadership is afraid of taking a step owing to the threat of militancy and the sacrifices of a hundred thousand martyrs. Should not they learn a lesson from the example of Benazir and should we not join heads and hearts to carry our community forward and seek new paths and avenues?

07Jan-2008

Indian Democracy, Justice and we the Kashmiri`s

India is known to the world as a big democratic country. Great Indian leaders like Gandhi Ji and Nehru were respected because of India being a democracy. But when we come to the case of Kashmir, it is generally said that democracy and justice neither move beyond Lakhanpur nor are these two boons available to Kashmiri`s within Indian Union. Never did the people of Kashmir elect a true government after late Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. All governments in the state were formed in accordance with the wishes of New Delhi. The more recent examples are the regimes of Mufti Muhammad Sayed and Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Today, I have taken up the theme of justice. I would be touching on the cases of those who are languishing in the jails for many years. I want my readers to be sensitive to the plight of these unfortunate human beings. Even if the J&K Courts finds them innocent and orders their release from the prison, they have to face the ire of the administration and are sent back to the jails. They are again subjected to Public Safety Act (PSA), and interned for two years. This process has continued for ten, twelve and even fifteen years. The Executive has thrown to winds the orders of the court not once or twice but innumerable times. No system and no structure raise its voice against this injustice. People are implicated in various fake cases as a result of political and administrative vendetta. These unfortunate victims have to shuttle between their residence and the courts of law, police stations and the jails a thousand times. The result is that they begin to nurse hatred against the system and those who run it. It also creates bad impression in their minds against Indian democracy and her system of public justice. They would seek revenge for putting them to a miserable condition. They lose no opportunity to give expression to the simmering hatred.

How have I been treated? It is an important question. I would like to recount something of injustice done to me. Whatever I put here in black and white is duly authenticated by substantial proof. On January 30 1971, an FIR was lodged against me in Sadar police station of Srinagar. It was

registered under Act 3 of Enemy Agent Ordinance. Under this Act death or life imprisonment can be given. In addition, cases under Section 365, 120-B, 435 and 392 were filed in FIR No. 15. Before proceeding to state details of my prosecution under these provisions, let me take you into the history of the whole matter.

Leading Advocate of Kashmir High Court Mr. Riyaz Khawar wrote in his article about Enemy Agent Ordinance:

"Under Section 2 of the Ordinance, enemy 'has been defined as any person directly or indirectly participating or assisting in the campaign recently undertaken by raiders from outside in subverting the Government, established by law in the state and enemy agent under definition means a person not operating as a member of enemy armed forces, who is employed by or works for, or acts on instructions received from the enemy.' That as per section 5 of EAO Government has a power to appoint a special judge in consultation with the High Court to try the matters under enemy agents ordinance net and as per section 7, special judge can take cognizance of an offence without accused being committed to his court for trial.

As per Section 9, if a person is convicted and sentenced to death or imprisonment for life, he may file a review petition before reviewing judge who would be nominated by the government from the judges of the High Court and as per section 11 of EAO the accused has no right to get defended by a lawyer unless permitted by the special judge or the reviewing judge. And as per Section 17 of EAO any person if discloses or publishes any information with respect to any proceedings or with respect to person proceeded against, the said person shall be punished with imprisonment that can extend to two years or with fine or with both.

That the said ordinance is unique in nature and is not even prevalent in the fascist states and is against international legal jurisprudence, international conventions and covenants, against the doctrine of common sense and the constitution of India and the state constitution. The whole ordinance is in violation of article 14 and article 21 of constitution of India and the doctrine of fairness and transparency.

The Section 3 of the ordinance provides death sentence for endangering life meaning thereby on small suspicion a person can be hanged. It is ironic that against the sentence awarded by the special judge there lies no appeal to any court on the merits of the case but only a review is

provided and the review petition can be filed only before a judge who is chosen by the Government from amongst the High Court judges and this power of nominating the judge is so arbitrary, illogical, unreasonable and as such prosecutor assumes the role of a judge. In the fascist rule of Hitler and Mussolini the worst criminals had a right to appeal and our democracy does not give a right to appeal to a state subject of Jammu & Kashmir state under Enemy Agents

Ordinance. As per Section 10, if special judge under the said ordinance likes to hold the camera trial he can do so at his sweet will which is totally against the doctrine of fairness and transparency and it is against the judicial concept of "Justice should not only be done but appear to have been done". The special feature of the ordinance is that no accused has a right to engage a lawyer unless permitted by the court while as under international law and under Indian Constitution every accused has a right to be represented by an advocate of his choice and if the accused is poor, the Government is bound to provide him with the services of a lawyer.

Moreover under Section 17 of the ordinance no person or the media can publish any proceedings with respect to any person proceeded against under this ordinance and if he does so, he can be sentenced to two years imprisonment or fine or both. Right from 1947, thousands of Kashmiris have been charged under the said draconian law. Muhammad Maqbool Bhat and his associates were also charged under the said ordinance and were sentenced to death under Enemy Agents Ordinance read with section 302 of RPC. Late Sheikh Abdul Aziz was also proceeded against under EAO and Hashim Qureshi and others are facing the trial under EAO for hijacking the Ganga plane."

Cases were registered in Pakistan against me, Maqbool Bhat the martyr, Ashraf Qureshi, Mir Abdul Qayyum, Mir Abdul Mannan and Dr. Farooq Haider under (1). Section 3 of Enemy Agents Ordinance 1943; (2): Section 3 of the Official Secrets Act with Act R/W 120 B & POK Code. (3). Section 342 PPC Wrongful Confinement. (4() Section 435 PPC R/w 120-B by mischief by fine + PPC Aircraft. Five of the accused were given punishment under Sections 342, 435 and 120-B, for the period of their internment, which was two and a half years and till the court adjourned. But I was given fourteen years of imprisonment under Section 3 of Official Secret Act for 14 years, under Section 342 for one year, under Section 435 for 2 years and under Section 120-B for 2 years. In all I was given 19 years imprisonment. What is surprising is that these Sections were applicable to my colleague Ashraf Qureshi also. But the Special Court awarded him two and a half years, which meant the he had been in prison plus till the court adjourned. Later on, Chief Justice Nasim of Pakistan Full

Bench of Pakistan Supreme Court acquitted me. It happened because Pakistan had filed a case against me in the International Court of Justice. Pakistan needed a sacrificial case in order to strengthen its case against India. I was made the sacrificial goat. At that time there was no law in India and Pakistan governing hijacking of aircrafts. Prosecution of a hijacker took place only after the event of hijacking. But since hijacking is a one - piece act, a case cannot be filed once more under the same Act under the Constitution of India or any other constitution in any; country of the world. The Deputy Chief Minister, Muzaffar Husain Beg, while arguing in the Session Court stated:

"Double Jeopardy – Article 20(2) of the Constitution of India adopts the Principle of Double Jeopardy.The Principle is attracted when the accused has been (A) Prosecuted (B) Punished and (C) for the same offence. This constitutional provision is attracted without any limitations as to the territorial jurisdiction where the accused may have been prosecuted and punished earlier. It is well established that even the conviction by foreign court will bar prosecution in India. This principle has been recognized and applied in TRACY V. Director and Public Prosecution (1971).

Muzaffar Husain Baig argued that Section Enemy Agent 3 of 2 of EAI to be applicable to those people who would play a part in the tribal raid in Kashmir, which took place in 1947, It is important that we should keep in mind the background in which this ordinance was enacted and the mischief it was aimed to curb. The ordinance was enacted soon after the tribal invasion of Kashmir, which took place on 20.11.1947. The purpose of the legislations was to penalise those persons who would help or further the case of this tribal raid."

Act 20(2) of the constitution of India, Article (7) of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Section 403 of RPC bar prosecution under Section 365, 392 and 435 with 120-B of RPC."

However after marshalling of legal and constitutional arguments in my case by my defence counsel Messers Muzaffr Baig, Riyaz Jan, and Riyaz Khawar, the Special District Session Judge framed charges against me under EAO Sections 365, 392, 435 and 120-B of RPC on 26 December 2006. Thereafter my counsel appealed before the High Court against the decision of the Session Court under Section 561-A. The learned High Court dismissed my appeal on 29 March 2007 on the plea that the Session Court will pursue the case. A Review Petition was filed in the High Court again under Section 561-A of CRPC, which is now under consideration.

Perhaps everybody must be asking that Hashim Qureshi possesses European Passport and enjoys all civil, political and human rights conceivable, and has an economically sound position. Why then did he put himself in such an embarrassing situation? What was the reason for him to bring his children and family back from Europe to Kashmir while people want to send their children to foreign countries? Perhaps I cannot produce a convincing answer for those people who live in their city, in their locality and with their family. Only those who, for any reason, live a life of exile, away from their homes and their country, can give a reply to this question. Thirty years of exile had begun to freeze my blood in my veins. One's native land and family members and relatives are a big boon. They may be people of different temperaments. That does not matter. They have an identity. In a foreign country one is lost as a stranger. The land, which contains the graves of one's ancestors, has some rights and the natives of the land have some duty. I have come to repay the debt of my motherland. I want to share the pain and pleasure with my people. I want to understand their troubles and travails. It is the 21^{st} century but our condition is akin to what prevailed in 12^{th} century. This pain and this suffering induced me to return to my land. I want to serve my people and want to rest in my own land.

Travel to India

I asked the Indian Embassy to affix visa for India on my European passport. The reply was that I was blacklisted and permission for entry to India was therefore denied. I had only one option and that was via Nepal. Previously whenever I came to Nepal I used to take the direct flight from Frankfurt in Germany. I obtained visa to Nepal in December 2000 with a transit of eight hours in Delhi. As I arrived at Delhi airport, I informed the immigration office about my identity. "I am Hashim Qureshi and a case has been filed against me in Srinagar under FIR No. 15. If you permit me I would present myself before the court there. Otherwise I shall fly to Nepal." I was put on wait for four hours. During this period the DGP of

J&K issued LOC and warrant against me and communicated it to Delhi police. I was arrested under Lock Out warrant and was put in Tihar jail like animals in cold winter of December. Instead of putting me in a closed cell I was put in an open cell where four people already remained interned. I was not given even life saving and other necessary medicines. I took ill and my pulse fell to 42. I was hospitalised.

My lawyers Mr. Tulsi and Mr. Pawa filed a writ petition in Delhi High Court against my detention. The writ petition was under consideration when my friend Muzaffar Husain Baig came to see me in Tihar jail. He advised me that I should withdraw the writ petition and surrender myself to Kashmir police. He said if the Delhi High Court passed any negative remarks; it would create difficulties in fighting the case in J&K. On the advice of Muzaffar Baig, I withdrew the case and I was transferred to Srinagar.

In Srinagar I was kept in Papa 2 camp as a prisoner for one full year. Actually Papa 2 was converted into a sub-jail under a notification. I was previously in Joint Interrogation Centre. My case under FIR No, 15 was presented before the Special Session Judge. This led to a long legal battle, which nobody knows when will come to an end. Today I put a question to myself whether I had committed a blunder by transferring my case from Delhi to Srinagar.

Three distinguished counsels namely Muzaffar Husain Baig (now Deputy Chief Minister), Riyaz Jan and Riyaz Khawar pleaded my case before Special Session Judge. The Government was represented by Mr. Farooq Kathwari regularly and occasionally by Advocate General. A lengthy debate ensued. The defence counsel zeroed on the point that the charges levelled against their client (myself) are the ones for which I had already been punished by the courts in Pakistan. A person could not be tried twice for the same offence nor could he be punished a second time. Under Clause 7 of Article 20(2) of the Indian Constitution, a person cannot be prosecuted for the second time for the same offence even if the person has been tried for the same case in some other country.

The court accepted our contention that a case cannot be tried for the second time under Double Jeopardy proviso. But since the case was tried in Pakistan under different clauses and in India different clauses were applied, as such the law of exemption from second prosecution could not cognisable. It will be noted that when the government was to take revenge from somebody, it gives teeth to the full state power. I remember that when I came here, one among the Prosecutors supported my contention and said," Hashim Sahib, as a law knowing man I can say that no case can be framed against you. This case cannot be framed under

Double Jeopardy proviso. But what can we do? We have instructions that we should find out some loophole in the case". Thus I am facing the loopholes that the government has manoeuvred to find.

But the fact is that there is one case and there is one Act; there can be different Acts and Sections to govern the Constitutional law. It is like a man committing theft. He is punished under various clauses for theft. The theft occurred in India and the man is punished in Nepal according to the clauses of Nepalese law. When he returns to India after completing his term in Nepal, does it mean that he will be tried once again in India for the same offence? Will he be tried under different clauses if Clause No. 7 of Article 20(2) OF Indian Constitution is not applicable?

We have a case in sight. In 1981 Satnam Singh and Gajender Singh hijacked an Indian plane and took it to Lahore. The court in Lahore punished both of them. They spent 13 years in jail. Satnam Singh later on returned from Canada to India. He was presented before Miss Sangita Dhingra Sehgal, the Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Delhi, on 20 February 2000. The judge dismissed the case saying, "It was a common law that no one could be punished twice for the same offence". The judge focussed on "same offence." She did not ask under what circumstances was prosecution pursued against SatnamSingh in Pakistan and under what clauses was the case registered here in Delhi

The judgement in this case was reflected in national papers of February 22, 2000 issue. I have a copy of the judgement of this case. It should be reminded that Satnam Singh and his companions had hijacked Flight No. IC-4223 when on its way from Delhi to Srinagar. It was taken to Lahore. Later on Satnam Singh joined the Bahujan Samaj Vadi Party.

The courts in India, Pakistan and the third world countries are like sacred cows. Even making a genuine comment is considered contempt of court. In European countries and in the US, debating court decisions is a common practice. I have faith in judicial system and hope that justice will be done to me. That is the reason why I am fighting legal battles in the courts of law. But I had certainly commented when on August 3, 2001 Special Session Court rejected my first bail application. The rejection had come for various reasons. I reproduce here exactly his reaction to bail on medical grounds."

"Defence counsel has filed certain test reports of the accused which suggest that he suffers from heart ailment.

Public Prosecutor maintains that reports do not reveal any such sickness

as would constitute an imminent danger to the life of accused. He has stated that the accused is being properly looked after and if required the government is ready to have him effectively treated any time. The statement of public prosecutor dilutes the medical ground also."

Interim bail

But later on in December 2001, the same Special Session court and the same judge granted me bail on medical ground initially for three months and then in March 2002 on permanent basis. I could not leave the province of Kashmir without prior permission of the court. Later on I was allowed to travel anywhere in India as well. But despite being a Kashmiri living in India I am required to have the visa for travelling abroad. I have to obtain no objection report from the government. Then only the special court will allow me to go abroad for 4 or 8 weeks. I was given permission first on 27 February 2003, second on 20 November 2004, third on 5 September 2005 and fourth on 5 January 2006,

Even today I am a European citizen and am holding a European Passport. I have asked for revival of my nationality since I was born in Kashmir and am a Kashmiri. This is given after staying for a period of seven years. On December 29, I shall be completing seven years of my stay here. But even after that whenever I want to proceed abroad I need to have the permission of the court as long as my case is pending with the court of law.

Our lawmakers and our bar members should focus on the point that two hijackings have taken place: one in 1971 and the other in 1981. For the '97' hijacking the blame comes on two Kashmiri youth, One of the two surrenders before the court of law and a case is framed against him. This is despite that he has spent nine and a half years in jails in Pakistan for the same offence. In the second hijacking offence two Sikhs from Punjab are involved. Both of them were given 13 years of imprisonment in Pakistan. One of them Satnam Singh returned to his country. The Metropolitan Magistrate lets him off on the plea that a person cannot be punished twice for the same offence. No case can be filed against such a person.. It may be reminded that the case of my co-accused Muhammad Ashraf Qureshi has been separated from my case because he is working as a lecturer in the Punjab University in Pakistan.

The arguments of my counsels Muzaffar Husain Baig, Riyaz Jan and Riyaz Khawar made before the Sessions Court as The Ground for Discharge are as follows

I. *An accused facing prosecution may seek discharge on the ground that (a) There is a legal bar to his prosecution (b): That the relevant panel Statute is not applicable to him or the alleged transaction, or (c) The allegations levelled against him even if presumed to be true do not make out a prima-facie case against him. (AIR 1977 SC. 1489 Para 10, AIR 1989 SC, 2045 Para 44, AIR 1980 AP 219)*

II. *In the present case the accused seeks discharge on all the aforesaid grounds for the following reasons. (j) The doctrine of double jeopardy (autrofois acquit or audtrefois convict, in English Law)*
(k) Article 20(2) of Constitution of India, Article 7 of the Covenant on civil and political rights. S. 403 of Cr. P.C. bar the prosecution of the accused under sections 365, 392, 435 read with 120-B of RPC.

Section 3 of EAP is not attracted to the facts of this case, even if all the allegations levelled against the accused are presumed to be correct."

Before I conclude this write-up let me state that Ganga hijacking case was also heard in the International Court of Law at The Hague. Prior to that this case was also brought before the IATA. At that level Pakistan had taken the position that "because of India's oppression and forcible occupation, Kahmiri freedom fighters are forced to take such actions (hijacking)." In the International Court Pakistan labelled it a conspiracy of India, which however the court did not accept.

It appears both India and Pakistan have international compulsions to register false and fabricated cases against us. The views of Maqbool Bhat, the martyr, and our organization (Jammu Kashmir National Liberation Front are nothing short of treason against both of them. Our views are restoration of pre –1947 Jammu and Kashmir State and freedom from both the countries. Despite shedding so much blood of our youth, neither of the two countries is prepared to concede complete freedom of Kashmir. I would like to make clear that although there are many drawbacks in the existing legal system of Jammu and Kashmir yet during past twenty years judiciary in the State has adopted a friendly attitude towards the people of Kashmir notwithstanding unfavourable conditions. It is unfortunate that nearly 45 thousand cases are still pending in the J&K High Court. In the lower courts, too, thousands of cases are lingering on. The High Court has only eight judges on whom the responsibility of disposing of 45 thousand cases devolves the famous

saying is that justice delayed is justice denied. People are fed up with the legal system. I have given a very brief appraisal of my case. Since my case is sub-judice, I cannot, therefore, give all the details. What has been briefly said is to open the eyes of those who are spreading false propaganda against me and without knowing the details of my case are trying to malign me. I know they do it for self aggrandisement and out of a diseased mentality... I am proud to say that God Almighty has shaped my destiny like that of my leader and friend Maqbool Bhat the martyr. Maqbool Bhat and I are the only two persons in this nation against whom cases under Enemy Ordinance were filed both in Pakistan and in India. In Pakistan he was accused of being an Indian agent and in India as Pakistani agent. The same is happening with me also. What will be my fate as a result of these cases filed against me does not worry me much. I am of firm conviction that if as a punishment for rendering service to my nation and native land and its freedom, and also in launching a fight for the truth I am to die a thousand deaths, I shall consider it my good fortune and deliverance.

Qatel gahun se chun kar hamarea alam
Aur niklenge ashaq ke kafale

21 Jan-2008

Beware!
Political jugglers are on the Prowl

Elections are due in October 2008 in J&K. Mainstream political parties have initiated public rallies and liaison. This indicates the election frenzy is already set in motion. Mir Waiz of APHC has started the campaign of opening offices in different districts to make his presence felt. But Gilani faction of the Hurriyat is harping on the old tune of boycotting elections. A political commotion has gripped the state.

But all this appears like a juggler beating his drum to put his audience in a happy mood and collect money. Mainstream politicians are raising various slogans and making false promises and hollow commitments as usual only to dupe the unsuspecting people and pave the way for general loot for another term of six years.. Congress-PDP Coalition has sunk to the lowest depths of ignominy. Let us analyze their statements in this regard. We shall also, at the end of this write up, say something about the somersaults of the separatists as well.

PDP+Congress are not only jointly responsible for all right or wrong decisions made during past five years of their government. Those whose houses were burnt or damaged, those who were left to languish in jails or were martyred, are morally, legally and on the grounds of principal responsible because they were in power during past five years and more. Moral degradation is of the level that during five and a quarter years of coalition, PDP has usually been speaking against the government. They have been duping the people with the slogan of self rule. It should be noted by the people of the state that NC, Congress or PDP representatives have taken an oath of loyalty not only to the state constitution but also to the Indian constitution. But in reality they are not loyal to the Indian constitution.. In a statement issued in Washington, Mufti Seed had explained it thoroughly that PDP's self-rule would be within the frame of the Indian constitution.

On the other hand, if we recall the previous history, NC has been exploiting the people by showing them the green kerchief and rock salt. Today they rush to Pugwash or other conferences to bend their knees in front of the Pakistani Generals. While acquiescing to them these leaders

sometimes endorse General Musharraf's self-rule theory. They managed to be photographed with the Pakistani rulers and then demonstrating these photographs in the valley they want to play with the sentiments of the people. In the past the separatist leaders had got themselves photographed with the organizations of Azad Kashmir and Pakistani leaders and then made a fool of the people of Kashmir saying that they had the blessings of Pakistan.

However the difference between the mainstream and separatist groups is that the latter have been doing everything in the name of *azaadi* or accession to Pakistan while the mainstream parties have been looking for the shoulders of the Pakistani generals and politicians to lean on. They forget that much water has run down the Jhelum and with that much of Kashmiri blood also. Let us first take into account the difference between the Congress and PDP which are in coalition.They make public statements against each other. Mahbooba Mufti said in a public rally that the valley of Kashmir was a barren land for the seeds of Congress. On the other hand Abdul Gani Vakil of Congress alleged that Mufti Sayed was responsible for the massacres in Bijbehara and Hawal. He reminded Mahbooba Mufti that it was Congress which gave her political existence.

There was not only exchange of acrimonious words between Congress and PDP members in cabinet meetings but the things came to even exchange of blows. PDP's tragedy is that on the one hand it wants to remain in power to draw maximum befit, which she has been having for last five years. PDP's hands are stained with the blood of so many martyrs and commanders in the name of peace talks. On the other hand it is befooling the people by issuing statements against Congress, NC and the Centre. These antics are to tell people that PDP is sincere to them. People have no grievance against Congress. The reasons are that State Congress is representing the Delhi Congress here. They have been pursuing their six – decade - old policy in Kashmir, which has led it to disaster.

Like other previous elections, the impending election in the State is also heading the same methodology. Parties are passing on responsibilities of economic recession, unemployment, illiteracy, oppresses ion and other atrocities to other parties in order to win votes for them. The truth is that they issue such statements actually against themselves. These are the parties that have been in the seat of power for last six decades and during that period the people passed from darkness to stark darkness. One wishes that these political parties had some constructive and developmental plan like all genuine parties in the democratic world or at least like the central political parties in India. One wishes they had a

concrete programme of eradicating unemployment. One wishes we had projects of generating 15 to 20 thousand KWs of electricity. One wishes we had basic infrastructure to produce our daily requirements. Is it not unfortunate that the state government has to beg from the centre for the salaries of its employees? As the situation is like that, how can we escape the diktat of central government as it is our funding source? Even the chief minister is selected from 10 Janpath.

Let us compare the situation with other states like Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Punjab, Bihar, and UP etc. We do not find central government able to do a lot of interfering in the internal matters of these states. This is because the economy of these states is not subservient to the centre. Mainstream parties in Kashmir should remember that they cannot link up states final decision meaning the right of self-determination of the people to the elections in the state. They must understand that elections in the state are limited to the running of the administration. This is also set forth in the UN resolution. It has to be remembered that the stalwart of a leader namely Sheikh Abdullah had won a thumping majority in the elections after signing Indira-Sheikh accord. But even then the disputed state of J&K could not be changed. Therefore these parties may go to innumerable Pugwash meets, may pose for innumerable snaps and adopt separatist slogans, they cannot mislead the people of the state nor is there any role for them while they are outside the power.

It has been proved during last twenty years that the mainstream parties breathe only when the parties in power or in opposition supply them oxygen. For some time in the recent past, the mainstream parties instead of putting forward some pragmatic programme for streamlining administration are engaged in mudslinging against each other. This makes people think that if these parties are inimical and anti-people to the known extent then it would be futile to cast votes to any of them. In truth these parties have nothing except to indulge in mudslinging against one another.

Let us be precise:

1. Trusted Delhi and were betrayed
2. Delhi wants to divide Kashmir leadership through a conspiracy
3. Delhi betrayed in the matter of autonomy. It first gave assurance and then backed out
4. Leaders like Mufti and Baig are responsible for burying Kashmiriyat.
5. Azad is providing security to corrupt people only to keep his position safe.

These are the statements of NC. Let us see what PDP has to grumble about:

1. NC exploited people for last 30 years.
2. Gun and destruction are the gifts brought by NC.
3. Sheikh Abdullah bargained the slogan of plebiscite
4. and Farooq Abdullah spoiled Kashmir.
5. NC sold Kashmiris in 1975 for counterfeit coins

Omar Abdullah and Mahbooba Mufti both engage each other in mudslinging, trying to befool the people by making tall claims that they would provide job to one member in a family. This is preposterous. It would mean providing one member each in 30 lakh families of the state with a population of 1.5 crores of people. Is it possible for any party to provide 30 lakh jobs? In all parts of the world where political parties are engaged in elections, they keep an eye on the resources of the state. They declare their manifesto on that basis only. They work on the previous manifestos and then proceed to have another manifesto for the subsequent elections. But the case of the state is different. The known political parties have been usurping power ever since our first election and thus perpetrating nepotism, lawlessness, oppression, illegal seizure of lands, unemployment and economic recession. The only aim that they pursue is to indulge in general loot once they are catapulted into the seats of power.

As regards separatist parties or the parties for whom armed organizations were fighting till the other day, they have sent hundreds of thousands of Kashmiri people to their graves and in the process created a large army of widows, orphans, that add chaos to confusion. This is what they gave the people by taking up the gun. Today when the days of gun wielding are gone, these separatist parties have virtually no programme to pursue that would drag the people out of morass of destitution. They just wait to see that a Kashmiri is martyred somewhere and his blood spills over the earth or where human rights are violated so that they would assemble a small or big crowd to deliver a speech and get their photographs clicked. They have no plan of how to accede to Pakistan or how to be practical in winning freedom, what is the methodology, what is the programme and how the people are to be are dragged into this resistance movement? Obviously, they have no programme whatsoever.

I have said it already and would repeat that if the people of the State want to achieve freedom like the people in Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia or more recently in Ireland and in Kosovo, then all the parties in the fray meaning Hurriyat (G), Hurriyat (M) PC (Sajad group), JKLF and JKDKP and all those parties and groups who believe in accession to Pakistan or in

freedom should come to a consensus on three points:

1 We shall not allow the unity of the original state of J&K to be broken.
2. We shall fight the coming elections in unison.
3. If we win 34 to 40 seats in the Assembly, we should join hands with the Assembly members of Azad Kashmir and as people's representative demand of both India and Pakistan to solve Kashmir dispute. If they don't give us a positive response we shall all of us resign from assembly *en masse* and create a constitutional and legal crisis. This would clear the path for a political movement for the people. If there is any talk of why the separatists had taken up the gun and would now do the politics of election, all that can be said in this context is that it will be a propaganda floated by the mainstream political parties and the central security agencies. We have noticed that in many countries in the world the governments that depend on the power of the gun are forced to come to talks when the gun power is organized in such a way that it forces the regimes to come to the talking table.

However, this is not the position available to the people of the state. Therefore there is no way out to carry forward political dialogue but to take part in elections and thus carry forward our movement as a political movement on international platform and also within the country itself. Failing that our role for next six years will be the same that has been there from 2002 to 2008, and that will be mudslinging and bringing allegations against one another and labeling one another as traitors. We shall remain confined to bringing out rallies on particular days. The boycott programme in the forthcoming elections will be the same that we witnessed in previous elections. Mainstream party candidates won seats with a bare few hundred votes.Permit me to say that when we accuse PDP, Congress and NC as anti – people parties pursuing the agenda of New Delhi, we, at the same time help them to grab the seats of political power and thereby pave the way for them

To perpetrate oppression and tyranny on the people of the State. It is the right time that separatist groups organize a seminar on this subject. They should engage themselves in a dialogue and come to a definite conclusion. There are indications that many groups including some sections of separatists will be taking part in this election directly or indirectly. But without unity they will not be able to achieve any positive result. The result will be that power will go back in the hands of a coalition of these three parties and then the story of bloodshed, loot, oppression, kidnapping, corruption and nepotism will have their field day.

07 April-2008

Unity is welcome but is it true and solid?

At the end of nine days of vigorous protest, the people emerged victorious. The order of allotment of 800 kanals of land to the Shrine Board has been revoked. However, during the nine days of protests several precious lives were lost and hundreds of people were wounded. It is cynical that before taking a decision on any issue, the administration allows the loss of lives and property to happen. Would it not have been good to follow the democratic principles and understand that a government should function only in accordance with the wishes of the people? When people oppose a decision, naturally the decision of the government is illegal and unethical.

The fact is that the Congress and PDP are playing these political tricks keeping in sight the impending elections in the state. The indiscreet decision has unfortunately led to emergence of communal tension in the state. The Hindu extremist parties in Jammu like Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal and BJP have given the issue a dangerous communal colour. They gave a call for general strike throughout India for July 3. This will create an impression in the mind of Indians that the issue is between the two communities while in reality it is an issue of allotting land in an illegal way to the Shrine Board. This misunderstanding is bound to increase the hatred of Indians against the Kashmiris. The danger is that both communities will be sensitized in a way that the case for division of the state along religious lines becomes stronger.

It has to be noted that despite protests in the valley, no pilgrim and no vehicle carrying the pilgrims to Amarnath has been attacked or vandalized, which is a proof that the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir do not harbour any ill will against the pilgrims. During the nine days of protests when the state administration had almost collapsed, and the roads were in the control of the people, pilgrimage to Amarnath shrine continued without disruption... But when violent demonstrations are staged in other parts of the state and the country, evidently the purpose is to upset the harmonious relationship among the people in the state. Attacks on Muslims and vandalizing their property in Jammu are a proof. Protest against allotment of land to the Shrine Board has proved that the people of the state still carry the urge for the freedom of their land in their

hearts and want to liberate it from the clutches of usurpers. People joined this movement voluntarily and in large numbers. Some political parties did try to hijack the movement but the people did not let them do so. That people did not let the movement slip out of their hands is a lesson of unity and solidarity for all political parties. The burning sentiments of the people need to be given the right direction. If Kashmir leadership still fails to provide united guidance to the movement, there is every danger of its failure as happened during the decade of 1990. Disunity among themselves, hatred against one another and bringing allegations to the doorsteps of others all have caused deep disappointment to the people.

We need to be careful about such elements as are bent upon giving the direction of violence to the movement. By stating that the demonstrators should not damage properties as thee belong to the people, Ali Shah Geelani has played a positive role. However, despite this instruction, some inconsiderate elements attacked ambulance cars which are meant to carry wounded persons to hospitals. Badamwari and Idgah Chowk built by the J&K Bank with the money of its customers were badly damaged. The leaders of a peoples' movement take full care that the movement does not slip into violence. Thus those inducting violence in the moment are not its up porters but its enemies.

Geelani Sahib deserves appreciation because he said it without any reservation that the Kashmir movement is not dependent on support from Pakistan or the gun. He said that the people of Kashmir will keep this movement going on through their own effort. This has been my stand since many years. We have to depend on our own strength and our own organizational capacity. Perhaps the time has come when we should give credit to the people of Kashmir that they are not essentially communal. Of course they have been nursing hatred for last six decades against the policy of oppression and suppression.

They have shown their determination in getting the Shrine Board allotment order revoked. They nurse the same fire and zeal for obtaining their right of self-determination. India and Pakistan may present the freedom struggle of the people of the state in a perspective as if it is their mutual dispute. As has happened today, the people of the state can and may come out on the streets in support of their demand for the right of self-determination and thus carry the movement to its logical conclusion. That will leave no rational for the rulers of India and their local agents to label our movement as terrorism. Indian rulers and their agents in the State should bear in mind that as long as the right of self-determination is not conceded to the people, the bloodshed and mayhem will continue in the Kashmir. Our generation may not get freedom but our future

generations will. The spirit of unity and cooperation shown during this movement has to be maintained and perpetuated at any cost. It is time that Geelani Sahib forgets all complaints and ill feelings against those people and those parties who believe in the right of self-determination of the people of the State. At the same time, the Hurriyat (O) group should also cast aside any sort of prejudice they have been nursing, and adopt the principle of carrying everybody with them notwithstanding the fact that some parties have their respective plans and programme for post-freedom period. The groups aligned with or outside of the two factions of Hurriyat (O and G), three factions of Liberation Front, Peoples Conference Sajad group and Democratic Liberation Party are all subscribing to the idea of self-determination. All of them should overcome the sentiment of personal likes and dislikes and keep three basic principles in their mind. One, the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir should be given unlimited right of self-determination. Two, no political party should conduct dialogue with either India or Pakistan unless both of them formally accept the right of self-determination for the Kashmiri's and take practical steps towards its implementation. Three, all parties should put an end to their individual existence and dissolve into Jammu and Kashmir Hurriyat Conference. It is very important that the people of Rajuri, Poonch, Doda, Bhadarwah, Kargil, Ladakh and Jammu are also fully represented.

Evidently, leaders and parties would want to maintain their individuality. It would be advisable that a mechanism of collective leadership is created in JK Hurriyat Conference. New structures should come up of its units in the length and breadth of the state. The benefit of this reorganization will be that chances of disunity will be eliminated. It has to be noted with regret that some leaders and political parties are dealing with issues on personal likes and dislikes. A spirit of tolerance has to be inculcated in them. For larger national interests ego has to be done away with. Spirit of service and sacrifice for the motherland has to be given first priority. No sacrifice is too much for the freedom of the nation. The misfortune is that everybody wants to be in the front line, and, therefore, feels happy with the disunity among the leadership. I am afraid that a day may come when people will say that it is the leadership that has to be held responsible for the slavery of Kashmir.

National Conference had become the party in which the masses of people had pinned their hopes. But the people became averse to it with the events like Plebiscite, Indira-Abdullah Accord and the regime of Farooq Abdullah. Furthermore, be it the composition of the Shrine Board or of STF or be it the allotment of state lands to their cronies, National Conference is responsible for the travails of our nation; it put the nation

under the yoke of slavery with the purpose of remaining in the seat of power. Some people are under the illusion that National Conference may perform a better role under the leadership of Omar Abdullah. But unfortunately, he does not promise anything of the sort. Like his father he is surrounded by sycophants. Speaking in a press conference on June 25, he accused me saying "Hashim Qureshi entered the Nishat Bagh and beat the tourist." This type of allegation is not only contrary to my way of life but is an attack of sorts of Omar Abdullah on the harmonious nature of Kashmiri`s. Perhaps he wants to convey to the world outside that the pilgrims and tourists are not safe in Kashmir. It is true that I, being a child of violence, have for last thirty years, dedicated myself to peaceful and non-violent struggle. I have been vigorously preaching it because I am convinced that violence of any kind is against the spirit of true struggle and movement launched by the Kashmiri`s.

Omar Abdullah should have first confirmed the truth of my so-called involvement in any incident in Nishat Bagh. No such incident took place in Nishat Bagh nor did I even enter the Nishat Bagh. As long as I, our activists and the people went on demonstrating at Nishat Bagh, it was all peaceful. The police and the people present there will bear witness that I had declared openly that if anybody threw a stone or damaged property I would not continue to be in the rally. Despite my exhortations I found that some people had pelted stones on police. I, therefore, left the rally. Two hours later, I came to know that some people emerging from Lashkari Mohalla had pelted stones on some buses on Four Show Road. An FIR has been filed against them in Nishat Police Station. Non-violent demonstrations were going on in Ishbar Nishat. People squatted on the road as a method of protest and I was one among them. Some National Conference goons, who had infiltrated the ranks of demonstrators, began pelting tones on the buses. Now the people have also come to know that in the protest rallies of Badamwari and Idgah public parks, the NC goons had initiated violent and disruptive activities.

JK Democratic Liberation Party has always adhered to the principles of peaceful and non-violent demonstrations What shall we say to Omar Abdullah except that:

Itni na barha paki-e daman ki hikayat
Daman ko zara dekh zara band-e qaba ko

(Do not prolong the story of the purity of your skirt
Just look at your skirt and also at the knot of your lion-cloth)

07 July-2008

Hurriyat unity,
Shrine Board and the Dal Lake

With elections round the corner political atmosphere in the state has warmed up. Suddenly there surfaced protests against allocation of 800 kanals of land to the Shrine Board. News came that the two factions of APHC were coming closer.

Unless all parties hitherto perpetuating Kashmir dispute come together on a broad-based formula of cooperation, our problems will not find a solution. Our desire or unity remains elusive because political parties and leadership in Kashmir show scant concern for the needs of the people and how their struggle could be supported.If at all semblance of unity is visible anywhere it is purely for personal interests with tacit intention of blackmailing one or the other.

We would be happy if both the factions of Hurriyat unite. One may ask what happened that after five years of relentless acrimony, opposition and factionalism, Hurriyat (M) has suddenly sought appointment with Gilani Sahib for a meeting. They are reported to have met for five hours. Commentators believe that for some time in the past Hurriyat (M) had been feeling that it is becoming irrelevant. Nevertheless, we shall not overlook the fact that Hurriyat (M) demonstrated courage and pragmatism in adopting the path of dialogue with India.

But the Indian ruling circles led by either the Congress or BJP did not offer Hurriyat anything beyond a few promises, few visions and some good sight-seeing. Despite adopting moderate stance Hurriyat (M) was not able to elicit anything from New Delhi for their compatriots. Apart from this, as we said, the effort of Hurriyat (M) deserves to be appreciated because it would have provided an opportunity for the resumption of Indo-Pak talks. The Hurriyat (M) ought to have abandoned prejudice and invited other groups and parties to join them in pursuing talks with New Delhi. To put it crudely, one may say that neither the Hurriyat (M) had the spirit of carrying the Kashmiri nation with it nor were the intentions of Indian interlocutors sincere. These interlocutors were marking time. Even the reports of the RTC were put in cold store for nearly a year and a half.

Communal disposition of Indian leaders drove the Hurriyat (M) leadership

to the wall. Whichever group or party tried to enter into a dialogue with the Indians, the latter drove them to wall by aligning with Kashmir mainstream political parties. They were humiliated in their own homes. Actually the reverse should have happened meaning the groups and factions prepared to talk of peace with Indian government should have been shown due respect and consideration.

Unfortunately, the history of past six decades has shown that India is not at all prepared to resolve Kashmir issue. From the days of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah down to the times of Hurriyat (M), Indians have always put off search for a solution of the issue. By marking time, they have strengthened mainstream parties especially the Congress (I). Apart from this, they have encouraged spreading of communal prejudice. In these circumstances Hurriyat (M) is left with only two options. One is to project itself moderate and continue with their politics of confusion at the mercy of the Indians till they reach the stage of irrelevancy. In that eventuality they are left with no alternative but to play the role of a mainstream political party. The other option, which the Hurriyat adopted, was to survive and make itself relevant. It cast aside all complaints, prejudices and animus against Gilani Sahib and came to him exhorting for joint struggle against the allotment of land to the Shrine Board.

Up to this day, neither Pakistani policy planners, nor Kashmiri intelligentsia and the members of bar association had met with any success in bringing unity between the two factions of Hurriyat. But one act of Governor Sinha and the present coalition government --- that of illegal allotment of land to the Shrine Board ---- helped eliminate animosity between the two factions of Hurrriyat, and brought them closer to each other. For this the Governor and the coalition government deserve our praise`

Reveling on the meeting between Hurriyat (M) leadership and Gilani Sahib, people enjoyed burst crackers in Raj Bagh and downtown localities. This speaks a lot about the Hurriyat Conference re-establishing its relevance in contemporary Kashmir politics. The question is whether this unity will abide for long or not. Will it hold on or evaporate in thin air as the Shrine Board ferver begins to subside. Only time will decide. Nevertheless, it also depends on the wisdom and sagacity of local political leadership as well as the attitude of Indian and Pakistani leadership.

There is another aspect to these developments. It was General Musharraf who labeled Hurriyat (M) moderate, and at the same time asked Hurriyat (G) to adopt a hard-line stance. This was an experiment with tripartite

talks on Kashmir. Now that Musharraf has been sidelined and Hurriyat (M) has been pushed to the wall, hence the effort is on to bring them closer to one another.

Amarnath Shrine Board

The people of Jammu and Kashmir never had any objection to the allotment of lands for mosques, temples and gurudwaras or to widen the scope for increasing their income. The cabinet sanctioned 800 kanals of forest land for allotment to the shrine board. Without attributing the element of religion, the question is whether this was a right step on the part of the government. Was it not a major lapse in contaminating ecology of Kashmir? The first thing to note is that the order issued by the coalition government is not a temporary but a permanent order. As people of Kashmir raised noise about it, PDP was scared of losing its vote bank. It spoke in contradictory tones, sometimes saying that the allotment was in exchange of Mughal Road and sometimes saying it was only a temporary allotment. Obviously PDP was unsuccessfully trying to maintain its credibility with the people. It was something like a thief raising an alarm. The fact is that PDP shares equal responsibility of allotting land to the shrine board. To show respect to other faiths and to be tolerant is the article of faith with us the Muslims. Qur'an explicitly enjoins upon a Muslim to show respect to all faiths.

Looking at the issue from legal and environmental point of view, we know that the Supreme Court ruling is that structures will not be raised on forest lands. Hence, the state government can be charged with violating the ruling of the Supreme Court. When structures are going to be raised on 800 kanals of forest land, it means felling down of a large number of green standing trees. Imagine its adverse and disastrous effect on the environment surrounding the site. We are not against anybody intending to perform pilgrimage. But 3 to 4 lakh pilgrims would leave behind wastage of nearly 20 thousand quintals at the rate of five kilograms per head. This litter will be spread over the follow land, fields, roadside, mullahs, ponds and orchard lands. Excreta of this vast number further degenerates the ecology. Is it not the duty of the shrine board to maintain cleanliness of environs? Is it not important to give instructions to the pilgrims when they leave the base camp that all litter should be dumped at one place or specified places? The pilgrims have to be told that they are going on a pilgrimage and not on an adventure of conquering other faiths. Big banners are fixed to the vehicles in which the pilgrims travel, and more often than not they raise such slogans as are hurting. Like: "*bam bam bole, qaim rahe bole baqi na rahe koi*". Well if slogan raising

remained confined to "bum bum bole" there would not be much resentment. But what do they mean by raising other slogans? We are afraid lest it is a calculated attempt to foment communal tension.

Previously Amarnath pilgrimage would be completed in fifteen days. That preserved the ecological purity and everybody really felt eager to make his or her pilgrimage a success. Members of majority community welcomed the pilgrims with an open hear. The decision of the coalition government to drag the pilgrimage to a long period of two months not only results in ecological degradation but also appears a conspiracy to foment communal tension. It is reported that Hindu extremist organizations are sending their activists in groups to raise slogans when visiting the cave. They put up posters and indulge in communal undertones. All this creates an impression as if, they are coming to proclaim a victory of conquering the Muslims of Kashmir. Allotment of 800 kanals to the shrine board seems a part of entire machination.

We would like to know from the coalition government and especially from Mufti Muhammad Sayed that when the Muslim Awqaf Trust was taken over by the government for administrative purposes, why was the shrine board left out ? All of its members including the Governor are from outside the state. We should not confine to only lodging protest but should seek legal redress of the case also. We have already referred to the ruling of the Supreme Court forbidding raising structures on forest lands.

Dal Lake

Not only Dal Lake but many other lakes and big and small water bodies that abound in Kashmir contribute to her grace and beauty. Dal Lake occupies the pride of place among tourist spots and sceneries of the city of Srinagar. In 1947 this lake was spread over an area of square 27 kilometers. Not only this lake but two other lakes namely Anchar and Nageen also were beautiful lakes with fresh and clean water. Today Dal has shrunk to ten square kilometers. Nearly 7,000 families have made their habitats on and around the Dal. In addition, thousands of tourists visiting Srinagar, take up lodging in the houseboats parked on the lake. The excreta and litter of this vast number is dumped in the Dal which can now be seen floating on the surface of its water. Once upon a time the water of the lake was so fresh and pure that people used to drink it. It will be news for the people of Srinagar city that the dirty and polluted water of Dal is being lifted at Nishat pumping station for supplying to the civil population of the city. Thus we have a city population afflicted with a variety of diseases owing to this polluted water. It appears that the people

living around the lake and those in houseboats are not conscious that in case the Dal turns into a vast marshland of foul smelling stagnant water, nobody would care to stay in their expensive houseboats built with a cost of crores of rupees. By spoiling the Dal are they not imperiling the means of livelihood for their future generations? If the present condition persists for another five years, we shall not find a single soul either residing in and around the Dal or a single visitor coming to stay there.

LAWDA was created to save the Dal. If the former and present officials of this organization and their kith and kin are subjected to accountability, big skeletons will tumble out of cupboards. Sometime back, the union government sanctioned 62 crores of rupees for cleaning and maintaining the Dal lake. We have reports that the government diverted the amount to some other head. If true, the inference is that the government and its institutions connive at misappropriation of funds meant for the improvement of the Dal Lake. They are anticipating the raising of multi-storied shopping complexes and buildings on the land that will dry up.

The onus of letting the lake die its natural death has also to be borne by the people of the city. We are as blind to the problems of Dal as to other problems facing us. It is high time that some leading personalities of the city, leaders of separatist parties and the citizenry in general constitute a Save the Dal Committee. The entire population has to be migrated on emergency level. It is no use to go on shedding tears and lamenting on fast deteriorating condition of the Dal lake. We are destroying the heritage that we were supposed to protect and preserve. Dargah shrine is also situated on the banks of the Dal where the holy relic remains preserved. We should have embalmed the place and the shrine but even around it litter and refuse remain dumped in heaps.

History tells us that Emperor Aurangzeb had desired that the holy relic of Dargah be moved to Ajmer Sharif. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) came to Aurangzeb in a dream and asked him why he did not let the holy relic be carried to Kashmir? With that the Emperor ordered that it be carried to Kashmir with all safety. Do we deserve to be called the fans of the Holy Prophet? While offering prayers in this mosque the fouls smell of the Dal is nauseating. Is it not our duty that in order to preserve the sanctity of the holy relic, we all stand up in unity to keep the Dal clean?

Narcotics

Spoliation is overtaking our youth. It is the use of narcotics, crime and immorality. There are reports that drug trafficking goes on in an organized manner in Kashmir particularly in the proximities of colleges and schools.

A system devised is that a small dose of drugs is supplied to the youth free of cost in the first instance. It is done as a token of friendship. Gradually the youth get addicted to drugs and then they commit thefts. Drug peddlers are reported to have found moles among some police personnel and sections of affluent class in Srinagar.

This menace can be eradicated if everybody in a family and every person in a locality keep his and her eyes wide open to see what is happening. In fact a widespread anti-drug campaign has to be launched. In all countries civil society has a definite programme of eradicating bad things from the society and correct aberrations. Unfortunately the government of the state has not had any role of this kind. As such all the responsibility of protecting our social structure rests with the civil society. If our society and social system are vibrant and responsive, we can continue our struggle for the freedom of our future generations. But if our society and our upcoming generation are addicted to drugs, what then is the fun of perusing any struggle for freedom. Our society and social system should be conscious of their responsibility. They have to rise against drug peddlers in order to protect our innocent community from a scourge.

29 July-2008

Why rain bullets on unarmed demonstrators?

With the revoking of the Amarnath Shrine land allotment order,a semblance of normalcy was visible in the valley. But some communalists of Jammu declared it an issue of life and death for them. This vitiated harmonious communal atmosphere. Under the guidance of Sangharsh Samiti goods made in Kashmir were set on fire. Communally surcharged slogans like "if you live in India you have to live as Hindus" were raised. One person named Dinesh Bharati created havoc on the highway between Jammu and Udhampur damaging vehicles from Kashmir and manhandled truck drivers. All essential goods coming to the valley were blocked, and in this way, unofficial blockade of the people of the valley was enforced. There appeared acute shortage of gas, petrol, diesel, milk powder, and meat in the valley. Most of all, greatest anxiety was the shortage of life saving drugs in drug stores.

The people of Jammu did have the right to stage a protest on the land allotment issue. But by giving it communal colour, they exacerbated the sentiment of hatred in the state. The huts of Muslim Gujjars were burnt and their community members were manhandled. The grim situation continued for forty days. A close study will reveal that there was actually no land issue to spring such a critical situation. Amarnath pilgrimage has been going on for centuries. In Kashmir, members of Muslim community associated with the pilgrimage event like hoteliers, shopkeepers, venders, load carriers and those setting up free kitchens, have been part of Amarnath pilgrimage for many centuries in the past. One should not forget that the holy cave of Amarnath was discovered by a Muslim "Malik" His family working in concert with the local Pandits of Kashmir always extended assistance to the pilgrims to Amarnath.

Ever since the Shrine Board was constituted by National Conference regime, the sanctity of the holy pilgrimage has been spoilt by extremist Hindus. Now that the government has entrusted the arrangement of the pilgrimage to the tourist ministry, the pilgrims would be receiving more facilities from the government. What then is the source of dispute?

It may be said that Hindu communalists of Jammu have created the land allotment issue only to spread hatred against the Kashmiris throughout India. Organizations like BJP, VHP and Shiv Sena are taking a leading role in this nefarious design. By playing communal card these organizations aim at carving vote banks for themselves. It is unfortunate that such parties of India as call themselves secular and the Indian civil society have been looking at this sordid story with full passivity. They accepted the economic blockade without any reaction. Our babies cried for milk and thousands of weddings had to be postponed owing to scarcity of essential goods. The blockade adversely affected all aspects of life.

This was the time of export of Kashmir fruit to other parts of India. Fruit trucks have to pass through Jammu. We don't have cold storage arrangement in the valley with the result that the fruit began to rot. Even the Indian administration and the army failed to open the highway. The result was that a call was given to the people of ten districts of the valley to come out for a long march to Muzaffarabad. According to the Charter of the UN no country can impose a blockade on another country or region. In particular, essential goods required for sustaining life cannot be blockaded in any case. But the extremists care two hoots for international or humanitarian laws. The communalists are not ashamed to note that on the one hand they are intimidating the Muslims in their areas but on the other hand the Muslims of the valley are extending hospitality and support to the pilgrims. Even free food was also provided to the needy among the pilgrims. In this way they gave a proof of their humanism to the world. It is important to note that during this tense period no member of the minority community in the valley was intimidated.

To Muzaffarabad

The call for March to Muzaffarabad on August 11, 2008 was given by the Fruit Growers Association of the valley. The Hurriyat (G) wanted it for 12 August and the Hurriyat (O) wanted it only after 16 August. Finally everybody agreed with the date fixed by the Fruit Growers Association. Before the call for March to Muzaffarabad was given, an All Party Delegation under the aegis of the Union Home Ministry appeared in the valley. Jammuites boycotted it owing to the inclusion of Mahbooba Mufti and Farooq Abdullah in the delegation. The delegation did not invite the separatists for exchange of views. Representatives of Fruit Growers Association and Chamber of Commerce were invited but they were made to cool heels for nearly two hours. Not willing to pocket the insult, they left the meeting place. In this way the delegation never met with the

representatives of the groups who could help in resolving the deadlock. It hobnobbed only with "trouble making groups" like National Conference and PDP. The grapevine has it that these are the two parties responsible for the creation of Amarnath Shrine issue.

On 11 August, hundreds of thousands of people came out on buses, trucks and vehicles to begin their march to Muzaffarbad via Uri. Crowds joined them from Sopor and Baramulla and from hinterlands. The marchers were led by the leaders of Hurriyat of Mir Waiz group, namely Shaikh Abdul Aziz, Naeem Khan and Shabbir Ahmad Shah. Unprovoked gun fire was opened on the marchers at Chehla near Uri. A bullet struck Shaikh Abdul Aziz in his belly. Two more young people among the protesters were also gunned down. Shaikh Abdul Aziz was rushed to Srinagar hospital but he expired in the operation theatre. He was martyred having made forty-year long struggle for freedom.

Protest rallies were brought out by Hurriyat leaders, JKLF and JKDLP from different quarters of the city of Srinagar. Crowds came out from a large number of rural areas like Pulwama, Shupian, Ganderbal, Pampore, Rainawari, Ram Bagh, Lasjan, Barzalla, Natipora, Tulsi Bagh, Nishat, Bagh-e Mehtab, Tankipora, Batmalu, Safa Kadal, Sopor, Baramulla, Uri, Kishtwar and Poonch. But security forces--- CRPF, Kashmir police and the army--- let loose repression on non-violent marchers. Besides tear gas, bullets were rained resulting in the martyrdom of nearly 30 persons in the valley. The victims included children and women. More than 400 persons sustained wounds and many of them critically. We know that in the civilized world, generally rubber bullets, coloured water jets or tear gas are used by security forces to disperse peaceful demonstrators. Contrary to this peaceful Kashmiri demonstrators were subjected to heavy tear gas and direct firing.

By indiscriminately raining bullets on unarmed and peaceful demonstrators in Kashmir, it is amply clear that the security forces have one set of instructions of dealing with demonstrators in Kashmir and another set for Jammu demonstrators. The youth in Kashmir ask the nagging question that how come the Sangharsh Samiti demonstrators in Jammu resorted to extreme communal violence and discrimination, attacking and vandalizing the properties of the Muslims and not sparing even the policemen, did not evoke the same response from security forces as has been the case with Muzaffrabad marchers in the valley. During forty days of strike and demonstrations, only 3 persons were killed as a result of police firing and 40 were wounded in Jammu. In the valley, security forces unleashed terror everywhere so much so that the I.G. Police accused the CRPF of raining bullets on Kashmiris while the CRPF

brought the blame on Kashmir Police. In this scenario of accusations and counter accusations I.G CRPF was recalled to Delhi and DIG was given the charge of handling the situation. It is important to note that even the Kashmir IG got scared of the massacre of the Kashmiris and passed the buck on to other forces. He was an IPS from outside the state.

There are also reports that while the Jammu demonstrators were blockading the highway, they were raising the slogans like "Long live Indian Army" and "*Bum bum bole*". For this reason the security forces and the army were lenient to the demonstrators. Will these extremists raise the same slogans and then go and attack the Governor's House or the Prime Minister's House, vandalize public property, target the airports and all installations for their rapacity and the Indian army and administrative apparatus will not raise even the eyebrow.

In the valley now the security forces enter private houses in the darkness of night and drag out people to beat and manhandle them and loot their belongings. On 12 August 2008, CRPF *jawans* attacked private houses in Bren. Nishat and Ishber and damaged vehicles on the roadside. In the same night security forces entered private houses in various localities in the city like Basant Bagh, Khanyar, Safa Kadal and GAO Kadal, beat up the denizens and looted their belongings. It appears as if these security forces have become incontrollable and that they consider all Kashmiris as their enemies.

Appeal to the public and political parties

Two factions of Hurriyat appear to have opted for unity; they are seen together at various places. But this unity will remain elusive unless (a) Groups and parties of same name in both factions of the Hurriyat do not come together. It means that Muslim Conference, Muslim League, Peoples League and other organizations should come under one banner and become part of the Hurriyat as in the days of united Hurriyat. (b) Hurriyat (M) and Hurriyat (G) merge into only one Hurriyat Conference (c) having done that; a Coordination Committee of all groups and parties is formed that offers a programme to the people that carry the movement to its destination.

Now that hundreds of thousands of people have voluntarily come on the roads demanding their rights and freedom, they have not to be disappointed for proper leadership. It has to be borne in mind that this is a peoples' movement and consequently the people want to see complete unity and cooperation among the leadership. They also want a well-

defined and non-violent programme to be followed. Ego and ideological differences have to be done away with. If lakhs of Kashmiris are united to come out on the roads sinking their ideological differences and personal likes and dislikes, will it not be highly disappointing that a few dozen leaders do not come together, sink their differences, and raise one voice from one platform. If they are unable to come together and forge unity among them, obviously the impression that the masses of people will carry will be that they are not sincere to the cause and to the people. People want to see all such groups and parties becoming integral part of the Coordination Committee as have remained outside the fold of both the factions of Hurriyat for the reason of personal likes and dislikes. The leadership has to realize that at this point of time the entire nation is united and they do not want to see any rift and division in the echelons of leadership. It has to be noted that this civil movement has found reverberation of the Kashmir's cry for rights in international community and even in India itself. .As such it is important that we maintain unity and lead the movement along the principles of non-violence. I feel happy and satisfied that I have myself been asking for a non-violent civil movement for many years because only then can we register the friendship and support of the world for our cause.

Mir Waiz Omar Faroaq has made very cogent demands. These are (1) Open Muzaffarabad road, as it is our right (2) Release all prisoners (3) start meaningful dialogue for the resolution of Kashmir issue. Indian authorities should accept these demands without waste of time failing which the movement might slip into the hands of such extremists who may, following the example of Jammu, give it an extremist turn. Indian authorities and the mainstream parties should understand thoroughly that India has no supporters and no friends left for them in Kashmir. Mainstream parties are changing colour like chameleon, seeking a roadmap out of this movement that would lead them to power. It is these mainstream parties that have been giving wrong advice to the Indian policy planers in regard to Kashmir. It is a reality that the progress of India and her people is also largely related to the solution of the Kashmir issue. We would like to give a candid advice to the Indian rulers. Instead of suppressing the movement and trying to create a wedge in Kashmir leadership, they should respect the voice and aspirations of the people of Kashmir. The tangle should be resolved through a tripartite dialogue. Kashmir leadership should be taken into confidence.

Although a Coordination Committee has been constituted but it is not as yet represented by all parties and groups involved. A ticklish problem is that a consensual programme has not been put before the nation. A major shortcoming in the movement is that in our rallies, some miscreants

resort to the use of violence and raise unwanted slogans. Nobody has control over them. Both groups of Hurriyat should make a public announcement that anybody taking recourse to violence in the rallies will be considered an enemy of Kashmir struggle. We need to be very careful about raising slogans. We have to focus on two slogans: *Ham kya chahte: azaadi* and *Muzaffarabad road khol do.* (What do we want: azaadi, Open Muzaffarabad road)?

We cannot increase burden on people by asking them for recurring strikes. We need to think of the laborers, vegetable sellers, petty shopkeepers and vendors of necessaries of life whose family depends on their daily wages and earnings. It may not be very difficult to initiate a movement but it is surely difficult to maintain it and see to it that it reaches its goal. It is highly desirable that a Relief Committee comprising all parties is constituted forthwith.Its duty is to provide succour to the families of the martyred or wounded people. They should not be left destitute. Relief should also reach the families who are short of foodstuff. These aspects of the movement have to be taken care of because without doing so the movement cannot reach its prescribed goals. It is of utmost importance that all parties and groups sink their differences.

It should not be difficult for them to do so. After all General Musharraf gave up his position as President of Pakistan thereby putting an end to the confrontational situation between the elected government and the president. I may remind the readers of *Chattan* that subsequent to the holding of elections in Pakistan I had made an analysis in an article that General Musharraf will have to quit within six to twelve month's time. We hope that after he has quit, a situation of chaos and turmoil will come to an end in Pakistan.

25 Aug-2008

Kashmir: Freedom Movement and International Scenario

The other day, a professor of Kashmir University asked me a baffling question. "What is our future and that of our coming generations"? Let me find an answer to this question based on facts and logic.

First, I may make it clear that despite living in Europe, I returned to this land out of my love for it and also to share the pain of our people. My work during last eight years is a proof. My experience has taught me that the age of violence and gun is gone. With forty years in politics, I can say that peaceful civil disobedience means victory of our nation. Such political parties as claim to have inherited the mass movement were sarcastic about my concept of civil movement. They did not desist to bring various allegations against me in their private and public meetings.These allegations were all baseless and far from troth.

I did not return from Europe in expectation of seeking power or personal aggrandizement. I worked hard in Europe, and then returned to Kashmir along with my family and children in a spirit that this is my native place; its people are my own people and I would like to live and die with them. But many people in Kashmir have not only sent their children out of the state but also abroad for education and training. The fear that the Indian government can decide my case at any time and ask me to pack up and leave the land did not deter me from contributing to the freedom struggle and service of the people.

I had made allegiance to the martyr Maqbool Bhat that I would see that the State of Jammu and Kashmir becomes an independent and sovereign state. For last forty years, no fear or greed could force deviation on me from my views of the freedom and sovereignty of Kashmir. I know many politicians and political workers changed skin as a matter of expediency. But I stood fast by the pledge I had made to the martyred leader.

Of course, as a result of the changing circumstances, whenever and whatever I felt would be in the interests of our nation, I expressed myself through the literature we produced or in the articles which I have been publishing from time to time. I tried to show the nation the roadmap that would lead it to its destination in the light of facts on the ground. Today the entire nation has stood up for its rights and freedom under the civil movement programme, DLP stands shoulder to shoulder with it. The movement is to be carried forward along positive lines

During last six decades several movements in the name of civil movement did appear in Kashmir. But these ended up in the loss of human lives, chaos and disunity.We need to pay attention to such aspects of the movement as would win us the support of world community and help us reach our destination.

Shrine Board issues has infused new spirit into the veins of our movement. After withdrawing the land allotment order, it seemed that normalcy was about to return to Kashmir. But the stance of Jammu communalists, economic blockade and oppression bestowed redoubled courage to the Kashmiris. People came out of their homes in hundreds of thousands, and proved to the world that they were not prepared to compromise with slavery out of repression, greed or intimidation. The civil movement is not any sudden outburst but the continuation of sixty year long struggle. It may happen that an urchin or a youth may pelt a stone here or there or give an unbecoming slogan —- all out of sentimentality. He is not aware of such aspects of the movement as have to be formulated keeping in mind international compulsions or the nuances of the powers that be. Therefore at that stage, a heavy responsibility devolves on the shoulders of those groups, political parties and leaders who are supposed to steer the ship. A good general is one who makes maximum gains with minimum losses.

On global level, we should first take into account the conditions and the ruling system of about sixty Muslim countries of the world. The bitter truth is that at present in many of these countries the Muslims are in power only in name. Their economy, defence and foreign policy are in the hands of European powers or the USA. How unfortunate that we the Muslims despite having enormous natural resources our capital is controlled by the American imperialism. Naturally we do not receive any support from these Muslim countries. When the Muslims of a Muslim country like Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan or Bosnia are faced with calamity, all that we do is to come out on streets, perhaps bare –footed, and make loud protests. But did a single protest rally take place in Muslim countries especially Palestine, Iraq or Bosnia during last twenty years against oppression and

suppression unleashed on us?

NATO and the US forces stay put in Iraq for last four years. Nearly 52 thousand NATO troops equipped with most modern weapons are engaging Islamic extremist groups in Afghanistan, Pakistan and adjoining areas. In addition 1.20 lakh Pakistani troops and 1.40 lakh Afghan troops are also locked in fighting with Al-Qaeda and Taliban. The daily toll of human lives in terrorist attacks in Pakistan is between 50 and 100 and that country is disastrously involved in terrorism. Now if we are putting Pakistan in a situation of trial in given circumstances, is it not tantamount to being inimical to her?

Powerful propaganda has created thinking with us that western powers are the custodians of human rights. .But a close examination of the facts of past history tell us that these powers do intervene either on the plank of human rights or of democracy and justice but essentially and primarily keeping their interests in view. They intervened in Bosnia and Kosovo just because these countries are located within geographical Europe. If conditions deteriorate there, that will have adverse impact on European countries as a whole. In the case of Iraq, the US and NATO forces are there with clear interest in Iraqi oil. In Afghanistan, apparently, they justify their presence by saying that they want to eliminate Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. But in reality NATO is eyeing the control of Central Asian energy sources which have remained untapped till date. At the same time they want to consolidate their position in Afghanistan vis-à-vis Iran. It is with this objective that only recently the US decided to pull out some troops from Iraq and re-deploy them in Afghanistan. This is what only our political leadership and intelligentsia can understand and not the ordinary youth who comes out on the street and pelts a stone.

It is more than six decades that Kashmiris are fighting against division and sub-division of their land and also against repression. Does any country come forward to give us its support? Very recently hundreds of thousands of people come out on the streets and raised slogans of *azaadi*. It is perhaps for the first time in the history of India that in as many as eleven districts curfew was imposed for eleven continuous days and restrictions were imposed on the media. Patients and sick persons suffered immensely in hospitals and people irrespective of age were made the target of the bullet. No country lodged a protest with the Indian government. Conversely India was admitted to the Atomic Club in a meeting in Vienna. Nearly 1.25 lakh Kashmiris have laid down their lives during past two decades. No country could exert even smallest influence on India to make her stop atrocities in Kashmir and concede the people their right of self-determination. It is so because no country's interests are

linked to Kashmir. There is neither a gold mine in Kashmir nor oil reserves. It is not a region that could be seen lying in the backyard of the US or Europe.

But notwithstanding these debilities, we never say that we should give up our struggle. What we impress upon readers is that the international situation around us should not be and cannot be overlooked when we reflect on Kashmir dispute. China has seized a large chunk of the territory of the state and China is also fighting against its own Muslim extremist population. We need to change the strategy of our movement and correct ourselves where we are headed. Organizations supporting accession to Pakistan ought to make some introspection on their emotional slogans like "*jive jive Paksitan*" and "Pakistan is our destination." They need to enter into serious debate and ask if this is possible. We should thank God Almighty that we have a majority of Muslims in Kashmir. Our faith and our beliefs have no threat from anywhere whatsoever. But when our leaders raise the slogan that freedom is for Islam, no Islamic country is going to come to our support. The western world has declared war on Islamic extremism and some Muslim countries are fighting shoulder to shoulder with them in this war. All Muslim countries, including Pakistan and the western countries have banned organizations like LeT, Jaysh-e-Muhammad and Al-Qaeda. We would not bring into discussion the objectives of these organizations; these could be adorable. But we must try to understand if slogans in support of those organizations are raised in our rallies and meetings, what impressions will the world community and the Muslim countries in particular gather from it. Is it possible that our goals will be met by meeting their goals?

Personally we have no difference with the green flag. But many organizations make a show of green flag together with specific banner lines which create confusion among the masses of people. Therefore it would be advisable that Instead of hoisting different flags we concentrate on one flag that represents the spirit of political freedom of our nation and not the religion. We could have a flag of four colours, viz. white, green, red and black with red *chinar* leaf emblem on the white portion. The world should know that this is the symbol of our national freedom. Nobody shall have hesitation in raising this flag high.

It is important that we stop pelting stones on police in public rallies so that security forces have no chance of unleashing tyranny on us. We shall have to stop vulgar slogans like '*ragro ragro*'. We should think of those Indians who though small in number still lend us their moral support and create enemies for themselves around them.

The community has not come to the help of the families that have suffered owing to militancy or the families whose dear ones have become mártyrs. The result has been that many families have been reduced to destitution. We need to render succour to the affected and the destitute. A national relief committee is the mechanism to undertake such projects; its members should be honest and selected with consensus of opinion. Accurate account of income and expenditure of the committee has to be maintained. We don't mean to say that the Coordination Committee is incompetent. I may clear the point by reminding those two days prior to the formation of Coordination Committee, I had told Shabbir Shah and Naeem Sahib that it was important to formulate a Coordination Committee to give direction to the movement and they agreed with me. In a press conference held before the formation of the Coordination Committee we had said that such a committee was now a necessity.

For a long time now the themes like the decisions of the committee and unity are debated in civil society. It should never be imagined that all wisdom rests with the politicians only. We should invite discussions and consultations with the intellectual class like university professors and conscientious and thoughtful people in the society who will debate on the present and future success of our movement. We can think of involving all sections of people in this great struggle. This can happen only when we come out of the cocoon into which we have confined ourselves and shun ego and personal likes and dislikes. We should not forget that education and future of our children are under serious threat of disruption. We are already embedded deep in an educational system that is capable of producing only clerks. We need to think of that cart puller, daily wager, labourer and the peasant who earn two square meals for their family and kids through the sweat of their brow. It means that while struggling for our rights and freedom, we have not to drag our nation to the brink where it loses its courage and steadfastness. I have seen with my eyes how people pounce on rice doles at ration depots after the curfew of several days is lifted. That scene of snatching food grains is a sordid one. People were scuffling to snatch a little rice. While this was going on some sadists would give out sarcastic yells "*pkaro pakrao Bharat ke chawal pakaro*" (take home Indian rice).

May I request that this write up is not labeled a litany of allegations and like previous writings consigned to oblivion? Individually, I may not have to face any damage. History will record that in my honest struggle I shall be emulating the example of Socrates. For last four decades I have tasted poison by telling the truth in the interests of our people and our land.

14 Sep-2008

Shall we never change?

In the beginning of September, Pakistan's newly appointed President Asif Ali Zaradari said that by the end of the month he would have a piece of good message for the Kashmiris. People in Kashmir impatiently waited for the "good news". Later in an interview given to the correspondent of *Wall Street Journal*, Zardari did dole out the good news. He told the correspondent that those in Kashmir taking up the gun to fight the war of freedom were in fact terrorists. While this statement was as good as rubbing salt into the wounds of Kashmiri, it was indeed good news for the Hindu extremists like Togadia of VHP, Advani of BJP and Bal Thakery of Shiv Sena besides other Hindu extremist organizations and government institutions. Zardari became the blued eyed boy of VHP and BJP.

Zardri's statement did not spring surprise to me because during my sixteen years stint in Pakistan I very closely studied the mind of Pakistani establishment and society at different levels. Sind, Baluchistan and NWFP are not really much concerned about Kashmir issue. Of course, in Punjab there is some sentimentality. For the establishment, army and political leadership in Pakistan, Kashmir issue is not only limited to the aftermath of the division of 1947 but, from their point of view, its importance lies in it being the source of water for Pakistan. With two lakes namely Dal and Wular gradually drying up and getting squeezed, the Jhelum River will ultimately remain a small stream of water.

A grave mistake committed by Pakistan is that she has been extending support to such Kashmiri organizations as support Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. The result is that Kashmir issue took the shape of a territorial dispute between the two countries. A look at the two factions of Hurriyat shows that their allies are essentially split into two with each group joining one of the two factions. In other words, 23 groups have split into 46 with each split group joining one of the two factions of Hurriyat. The interesting thing is that all of these groups are pursuing same agenda and have are carrying same struggle, viz. accession to Pakistan. Yet all of them raise slogans of unity and Coordination Committee.

Asif Zardari's statement may be painful to them but not to us. We have

been repeatedly saying that Kashmir freedom struggle cannot be carried on by depending on Pakistani rulers. We must also understand existing condition of Pakistan. Their economy has almost broken down so much so that their foreign exchange reserves can sustain the country for just three weeks. Armed resistance against Pakistani army is active in Baluchistan and NWFP. More than three hundred thousand Pakistani troops are engaged in fighting these insurgents. We should have no complaint against Pakistan's rulers. It is they who constructed Al-Qaeda and Taliban, armed them and now are busy chopping off their heads branding them terrorists. If Kashmiri militants have also been included in this list, it should not spring any surprise. Long back we had said that by declaring Al-Qaeda and Taliban as terrorists, Pakistan had served the interests of the United States. One day Kashmiri militants may also be branded terrorists. I would suggest that such organizations in whose manifesto accession to Pakistan has been recorded should do some rethinking and change their concept. They should come together to find a realistic and viable formula for resolving Kashmir issue.

In reaction to "*Lal Chowk chalo*" slogan, the government imposed curfew in ten districts of the valley. Not a bird could beat its wing. All roads linking up with the main highway were barbed to deny human movement. Entire media was shut down and for three days no newspapers were published. Patients were denied treatment. Confusion prevailed when despite indefinite curfew in place Geelani Sahib asked people to return to their work from next day. The government had not still lifted the curfew. The announcement of Geelani Sahib became a riddle for the people. The government may have succeeded in preventing mass march to Lal Chowk, but those swearing by democracy still have no realization of its failure of their preventive policy. The Indian constitution guarantees to her people the freedom of expressing their aspirations and demands through peaceful rallies and demonstrations. By imposing curfew and denying the right of the people to peacefully express their grievances, India has proved that Kashmir is not a part of the Indian Union. It has also shown that the Indian constitution is not applicable to Kashmir. By her over-action, India has brought a bad name to herself and publicized its failure by preventing the march of the people to Lal Chowk. Presuming the people give a call for March to Lal Chowk on the day of voting in forthcoming elections, will the government impose curfew in all the ten districts once again? How can polling go on if curfew is imposed? The fact is that the government over-reacted. March to Lal Chowk and holding a public rally were not too serious developments to merit imposition of strict curfew.

It is time Indian authorities change their thinking about Kashmir. At

present their thinking is usually shaped by reaction to and with reference to Pakistan's policy on Kashmir. If there is pressure of militancy or concentration of troops on the borders or pressure on international level, then New Delhi makes a noise for talks on Kashmir. There ensues the drama of talking to the Hurriyat or the sham of RTC etc... Recommendations made by various committees constituted under the RTC two years ago have not been implemented till date. But when there is slight relent in overall situation Indians revive the policy of suppression and oppressing in Kashmir. This is humiliation for Kashmiris. As well-wishers of the people of India and Pakistan, we as Kashmiris would like to make an appeal that Indian authorities should not look at Kashmir issue from the prism of militancy or pressure from Pakistan or international community or to appease the Kashmiri mainstream political parties. This issue has to be considered from humanitarian standpoint, from the principles of Gandhi ji and promises made by Nehru to the Kashmiris. They should analyze India's Kashmir policy in the background of peace, stability, development and progress of the people at large.

Emergence of peoples' revolution in the State lends strength to the freedom struggle. If the mainstream parties, namely NC and PDP join this movement and impress upon the Indian authorities to find some solution of the problem, I think New Delhi would find it unavoidable to find a solution to the logjam. In that case Indians would have been left with no alternative. When I speak of solution of the issue, I mean any solution that brings respect to mainstream political parties and makes them popular with the masses of people. Unfortunately the chief of one among the mainstream parties trivialized democracy by raising the slogan that elections should definitely be held even if only three or four or five per cent votes were cast. The visit of the Election Commissioner was the most important news after the *Lal Chowk chalo* slogan raised earlier. State mainstream parties presented reasons in support of their views on holding elections. Except PDP all other political parties are willing to participate. They knew that in Jammu and Ladakh regions, 25 to 30 per cent of votes were likely to be cast. Congress, BJP and Panthers Party have their base in Jammu region. Though NC and PDP have their base in the valley yet both of them are aware that a government in the State of Jammu and Kashmir was likely to be formed only with a nod from New Delhi. Thus NC got the wind that this time an opportunity was likely to surface for the NC to form government in coalition with Congress. Therefore even if only one or two per cent votes were cast in the valley, these so-called democrats would have no qualms of conscience in forming the government. The writ of Indian democracy does not run north of the border at Lakhanpur.

Probably elections in the valley are scheduled for November. The question is whether a government formed under these circumstances will be the government of the people in truth? Does a government supported by just five per cent votes have moral and legal justification to hold the reins of power?

I must also bring the blame to the separatist's organizations also. Why did not they invite the leaders of mainstream parties to join hands for finding a satisfactory solution to the Kashmir issue? Had their parties been invited to come and stand shoulder to shoulder with the masses of people, they would have no reason to say no... It would have served a clear message that the people had forgiven them for their past mistakes and accepted them as part of this nation. As a principle, wherever in the world a struggle for national liberation has been launched, first of all unity has been forged among the people and its leadership. MaoTseTung and Chiang Kai Shek joined hands against the occupation of their land by Japan. In Viet Nam and Algeria, unity among the people was forged to resist the occupation forces of the US and France respectively. *Al Fath* and *Hamas* have united in Palestine. I cannot resist stating it clearly that the separatist organizations have not been able to handle the great revolutionary movement of Kashmir properly. Under pressure from the public they did say they had forged unity but in reality a grand alliance of 23 groups was not to be a reality. This is the reason why the people here could not get the type of guidance which was seen in the case of Azam Garh in Uttar Pradesh. Two Azam Garh youths were martyred in Delhi. The people of Azam Garh decided to observe the festival of *Eid ul Fitr* with utmost simplicity and sobriety. In recent turmoil in Kashmir more than fifty persons lost their lives and about a thousand youth were wounded. In three days people withdrew forty crore rupees through ATM, and another eighty crore from the branches of J&K bank to celebrate *Eid ul Fitr* with all gaiety and jubilations. On the day following Eid, (*arfa*) bread and meat disappeared from the market after 2 PM. People had forgotten the martyrs who laid down their lives during last twenty years of freedom struggle.

We have forgotten those 40-45 families whose youth recently sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation. I made repeated appeals to the Coordination Committee that relief committees on *mohalla* level be established to take care of the families of the martyred or wounded people. Our leadership is a victim of egoism and self-importance. It refuses to understand an ordinary man's pain and suffering and needs to survive. The result is universal disappointment and alienation. In an earlier article I had suggested that besides the Coordination Committee, intellectuals and luminaries of the community should come together and

offer their suggestions and advice to carry the movement forward. Their suggestions should be debated and analyzed. But instead of discussing suggestions with a positive approach, all that happens is to bring a litany of allegations against one another. Hazrat Ali said: "*Do not ask who is saying or who is doing. Watch what he is saying and what he is doing*". But what is actually happening here is the reverse of the wise words of Hazrat Ali.

13 Oct-2008



Hashim Qureshi address MNWA Convention at Shere - Kashmir Park



Voices unheard Hashim Qureshi addressing people at Banihal



Junaid Qureshi Leading a Rally



Hashim Qureshi just after the hijacking 1971.



کونسل لیگ کے راہنما ائیر مارشل نور خان کشمیری حریت پسند ہاشم قریشی سے بات چیت
کر رہے ہیں ان کے پاس مقبول بٹ بیٹھے ہیں۔





Kashmir Elections in the background of world scenario

Despite unfavourable conditions, the union government and the Election Commission decided to hold elections to the J&K Assembly in two phases. It would be better to call it selection and not election in democratic parlance. With the announcement of first two phases, people staged demonstrations against those who had filled their nomination papers in their respective constituencies. When Omar Abdullah filled his nomination papers in Ganderbal, there was not only a protest rally but curfew was also imposed in the town. People vandalised thousands of banners put up by NC and the youth clashed with the police. At Naidkhai also stones were pelted on a limited rally of Omar Abdullah. People attacked the vehicles of PDP candidates namely Farooq Inderabe and Sahar Bandey. Similar incidents took place in Bandipore also. It has to be noted that these protest incidents were spontaneous; nobody led them.

Returning candidates to the legislature through free and fair election is the very spirit of democracy; free election is the very soul of democracy. The voters enjoy the right to cast or not to cast their votes. If there is freedom to canvass for casting vote in favour of this or that candidate, and if the candidates have the right to propagate their plans and manifesto for winning the elections, in the same way those not willing to cast their votes have the right to approach the voters and canvass for not casting their vote. The Chief Election Commission of India stated that the groups and parties have the freedom to give a call for boycott and also propagate boycott of polling as it is what the Constitution of India stipulates.

But it appears that the Indian authorities have taken a pledge of abusing the democratic process. Peaceful public demonstrations and rallies are dispersed through the use of brute force. It is worse than what is obtaining in Banana States in the African Continent. India has the distinction to be the world's largest democracy based on political principles of Mahatma Gandhi. But in the case of Kashmir, those principles are replaced by violence unleashed on the people and what is done in Kashmir is not election but selection. Leaders and activists of both factions of Hurriyat and of Liberation Front are put behind bars.

Anybody suspected of supporting boycott of elections is arrested and subjected to the imposition of PSA and sent to the jail. We have often lamented that India's democracy and democratic institutions have not reached the ordinary people of the State of J&K. Recently, in Patna a union minister misbehaved with the Manager of Kingfisher. The entire media turned against the minister and an FIR was lodged against him. Can this be possible in the State of J&K?

During past sixty years, men in position of power and authority have not only sucked the blood of poor but have also misappropriated billions of rupees sent by way of aid to the state. These hefty sums have been distributed among close relatives and kith and kin. Despite receiving largest aid package from the Centre in the past, our state continues to remain a dependent unit. No factories have been raised; no means are explored to develop agriculture, horticulture, and tourism and power production.

Economy has been transformed into commerce. In 1947, we imported only salt but today we have to import basic commodities like onions, tomatoes, chicken, lamb and other necessary goods. Water resources are drastically depleted. Dal, Wular and other lakes are facing disaster. Leave aside rural areas and towns even the capital city has acute shortage of drinking water. The states like Himachal Pradesh and Jharkhand while signing a treaty with the centre for generating electric power demanded 50 per cent royalty from the central grid. Our state government remained content with just 20 per cent. This shows that the authorities of the state are not sincere to the people. Central authorities have given a free hand to the local rulers to suppress the sentiments of self-respect and freedom loving people of Kashmiri. Local leaders have always tried to impress upon the authorities in New Delhi that in Kashmir everybody is pro-Pakistan and they are the only true Indians. As such they do not hesitate to unleash all sorts of crimes against the local population. Corruption, nepotism, violation of rules and norms and perpetration of oppressive measures are rampant. They lead in spreading sentiments of hatred against India. When they are in power, they have all praises for India. But when out of power, they are much more staunch separatists than Geelani Sahib.

Had India been sincerely prepared to solve Kashmir question during the tenure of General Musharraf, it is possible the dispute would have come to an end without any harm to India's integrity and geographical position. Now that millions of Kashmiris have joined the movement, it is strange that India wants to suppress it through muscle power. Is it not a challenge to the Indian democracy and India's prestige in the eyes of world

community? As head of the non-aligned movement, India condemned foreign occupation in Algeria, Palestine, Viet Nam and Cambodia. She made practical contribution towards the freedom of these countries. Today the same India is supporting puppet governments in J&K and indirectly resorting to suppression and oppression of the people. This is precisely what imperialist used to do.

We are aware that as decided by the Election Commission, election in J&K will be held in seven phases. The question is if in a constituency, there are a hundred thousand enlisted voters but only three or four thousand of them come out to exercise their right of voting and the candidate wins by just two thousand or a thousand votes, will it be considered the election victory of the candidate? Is it fair on moral grounds? Will the elected member be called the representative of the people? Thus the question disturbing ones the mind is that should it be called election or selection? How can a government formed by selected persons provide any comfort to the people of the state in addressing their problems? When the governments that were in place for last six decades failed to provide comfort to the people, how can one think of this government run by selected persons resolve the problems of the people?

Big international institutions also advise India to resolve Kashmir issue through dialogue. Recently UN Secretary General advised India to resolve Kashmir issue through negotiations with Pakistan. Many Indian intellectuals, too, desire that the issue should be resolved through dialogue. The world is changing. India is engaged in creating for herself a unique position in terms of her democratic dispensation and economic development. India has been fortunate to have produced a great man like Gandhiji whose statues are installed in many cities and towns of the countries of the world. The world knows him as a great reformer. Delhi government needs to change its thinking that Pakistan is a strong country that can make an intervention and hence Kashmir question remains alive. India has to understand that Indian leaders have made some commitments to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the people of the state demand justice.

World is changing fast. Obama has won presidential elections in the US and Indian leaders should not take this as an ordinary event. It indicates social revolution. Forty years ago, a black could not travel in a bus in which the whites travelled; the blacks could not eat in a restaurant where the whites used to eat. Today Obama won the election by raising the slogan that he would make an attempt to bring peace in the world. Obama is not trying only to pull out American forces from Iraq, but is also supporting the option of conducting talks with the Taliban. He distanced

Kashmir from terrorism and stated that India, China and Pakistan shall have to find a solution of Kashmir issue so that Pakistan does not consider India an enemy. He said that India will not be only able to solve its internal problems but can also contribute positively in eradicating terrorism in Afghanistan and other parts of the world. European countries are also focusing on resolving Kashmir issue.

One may make some plain speaking. Despite six decades of suppression and oppression, India could not succeed in winning Kashmiris to their side. Is it not good that instead of prolonging the policy of suppression and oppression for another sixty years, a solution of the problem is found that would ensure the integrity of both India and Pakistan and at the same time maintain the self-respect and the sentiment of freedom of Kashmiris? The destiny of coming generations, progress and development of both India and Pakistan is closely linked to Kashmir issue. Now Kashmiris have adopted the policy of non-violence preached by Gandhiji and Martin Luther King. If big world powers could not crush public sentiments in Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Algeria etc. how can Kashmiri people be subdued through the use of brute force, oppression and fake elections.

10 Nov-2008

I say what I feel is the truth

It appears as if truth is bereft of its importance. From Gaza to Kashmir and from Afghanistan to Iraq, human blood is shed mercilessly. Solutions to problems are sought not on the basis of facts of given situation but as a matter of expediency. This exacerbates the problems of the people.

I was in Europe when Israel using American arms and ammunition not only brought death to human life in Gaza but destroyed property of Palestinians worth 4000 million dollars. Hospitals, schools, mosques and even UN installations were razed to ground. Israeli soldiers caught hold of ten children of a Palestinian mother and asked which five of them would be shot dead. Those claiming to be the upholders of democracy and peace were watching this oppression and tyranny through the world media. But human conscience among European or American societies was hardly responding to it. As the Israelis massacred more than five hundred Palestinian children in cold blood, the world turned its eyes away from the gory scene. What is more, some Arab countries owing to ideological differences with Hamas, preferred to remain silent on these atrocities.

However, in some Arab and European countries ordinary people came out on the streets and protested against the barbarous act of Israel. They called for relief for the victims of Gaza attacks. Human Rights organizations in European countries and ordinary people took initiative to provide full relief to the sufferers. Medicines, foodstuff, clothing and other necessaries were collected in huge quantities. Yet those who rule the roost never cared to find a solution to the Palestinian issue on the basis of facts, Arab and Palestinian differences notwithstanding.

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama did speak about Kashmir issue. But in Europe and the US, it is hardly receiving any notice. The patent rhetoric is that India and Pakistan should sort out this matter through mutual dialogue.

I received an invitation from Emma Nicholson, the European Parliament member to participate in a conference on Kashmir Culture and Heritage held on 10 December 2008. For two days the conference debated the

academics and not the question of political rights of the people of Kashmir. In my statement I told the conference that if the European Parliament takes up issues like disappearances, human rights abuses, denial of freedom of expressing, denial of freedom of movement and un-named graves instead of dabbling in the academic matters, it could have helped to find a solution of the problem. But as we know, European powers and the US have many more irons in fire than Kashmir problem. Deteriorating economic situation in Europe and the US, fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan and other serious issues keep them busy and thus Kashmir is relegated to the backyard.

However, after interaction with some European organizations one could feel that some aspects of Kashmir issue are within their focus. For example, commenting on the mass movement in Kashmir in the months of June, July and August (2008) they said it was intriguing that after staging demonstrations on such a large scale, the people came out and cast 60 to 70 per cent votes in the assembly elections. Others said that a movement that took the toll of 60 to 70 lives and wounded over 1500 persons finally culminated in people taking part in elections. There were others who thought that if after such massive mass movement, local leadership had formed a broad-based united front to take part in elections collectively and captured the Assembly, then like Latvia, Lithuania and Kosovo, the whole world would have evinced keen interest in Kashmir issue. Except a few places in the city, the people took part in these elections in large numbers everywhere.

It is unfortunate that the world knows of Kashmir as a dispute between India and Pakistan but ignores the right of self-determination of Kashmiris. Wherever I had an occasion to talk about Kashmir, I felt deeply that we seriously lack proper leadership. Unless we are able to forge united leadership, we shall not be able to secure the support of the US or European powers or of Islamic countries. In the absence of united leadership, the conscience of world community will not be sensitized to the killing of our youth, wounding them, destroying and vandalizing our homes and the humiliation heaped on us by armed forces. By exuding rhetoric with surcharged emotions, by taking recourse to religion and references to the Islamic history, by haranguing the audience with lengthy speeches, by giving press conferences and interviews to local papers and expressing anger through pelting stones in some areas and staging demonstrations, we may, at best be able to minimally harass the local administration, or provide some stuff to the local and Pakistan TV. But it is not going to cause serious embarrassment to the world community or even the rulers in New Delhi.

Many serious-minded, mature and elderly persons in downtown Srinagar including the business community are reported to be saying that elements with vested political interest use small children in downtown for pelting stones and raising slogans in rallies. They do all this to keep themselves alive. This has resulted in downtown Srinagar lagging far behind in economic development and progress. One wishes that people in downtown understood the ground situation and demonstrated patience and perseverance, not volunteering to carry all the burden of Kashmir politics on their shoulders. In adopting that course, the ruling circles would not have the pretext of denying downtown Srinagar opportunities of development and progress. Relentless stone pelting exercise in downtown has rendered its educated youth, both males and females, unemployed. In particular, females of the downtown despite high educational qualification are confined to the four walls of the house. In small houses in the locality, which are nothing better than pigeon-holes, three or four families live huddled together. They are confronted with serious social and economic problems that cause mental torture to them. In his recent speech at Naqshband Sahib, Mir Waiz appealed to the people to give up pelting stones. But just after two hours, stone pelting began which disrupted the daily life of the people. I, therefore, appeal to the leadership to cast their ego and forge a broad-based unity on the basis of principles. The people have become fully conscious and are capable of taking decisions themselves making the present leadership irrelevant.

Conditions in Pakistan are alarming. Her intellectuals and political leaders say that Pakistan has a greater threat from inside than from outside.Those judges of the Pakistani Supreme Court who declared Nawaz Sharief and Shahbaz Sharief ineligible for fighting elections. Were appointed under PCO during General Musharraf's regime. This has created great confusion in Pakistan's political scenario. About Pakistan People's Party, it is said that when out of power, it is oppressed and when in power it is an oppressor. President Zardari has not honoured all the commitments made to Pakistan Muslim League (N). It had committed to Nawaz Sharief to reinstate the chief justice and other deposed judges but reneged from its commitments. For this reason lawyers declared long march which Muslim League (N) decided to join. Thus ineligibility of Nawaz brothers was obtained through the instrument of Supreme Court, and the Government of Punjab was dismissed.

This was how Asif Ali Zardari encouraged undemocratic forces to strengthen their position in Pakistan. The Army in Pakistan has always made internal political disorder and mutual dissensions among political leaders a pretext for seizing power. We pray that democracy gains

strength and becomes prosperous in Pakistan. But more than our prayers, the consciousness on the part of Pakistani political leadership is needed to save democracy. A universal impression with observers all over the world is that having sponsored and abetted terrorism, it has now become the victim of its Frankenstein threatening its very existence. Terrorist attack on Sri Lanka cricket team in Lahore has made Pakistan the most unsafe country in the world" she has got isolated. Therefore it is for the rulers of Pakistan to rein in terrorists and save their country. People had many expectations from young Omar Abdullah after he became the chief minister of the state. They thought he did not carry a cumbersome historical baggage: they thought that he had the opportunity of infusing new thinking and new methods in his work culture, and thus relieve people of many difficulties. But an impression emerging after watching his functionality for last two months, is that he, too, is got bogged with same old rut. Though, I think two months period is not enough to pass a verdict on the ability or otherwise of a new chief minister to deliver goods, yet he should have made a serious analysis of the killings in Bomai, Sopor, Bandipora and Maisuma lest some elements were out to hatch a conspiracy against him while he was still settling down at his work.

Omar Abdullah should be fully alive to the fact that the State of Jammu and Kashmir is identified as a disputed state. He may not be able to resolve this dispute without internal and external support. But at least he shall have to find a solution for a couple of serious problems of the state. For example, in order to reduce tension and hatred among the three regions of the state, he shall have to ensure that equitable economic development and good governance in of all the three regions, namely Ladakh, Kashmir and Jammu is fully assured.All the three regions are facing unemployment, poverty, misuse of resources and corruption. True, everybody cannot be provided with. A government job but in order to make the state self-sufficient alternative sources of employment have to be explored. It should be possible for Omar administration to set up small units of hydro power plants to augment supply of electric power to the state, which is almost in a very critical situation. It would be advisable to review all agreements made with the centre in the past in regard to production and distribution of power in the state.

The state imports mutton and poultry worth 3500 crores of rupees annually. This huge industry should be developed in the state itself. Nature has bestowed upon us the bounty of large meadows and grazing fields and resources which are capable of developing it into a thousand crore rupees industry.

A big hurdle in state's development is nepotism and corruption. Both of these evils are excruciating for the people. The chief minister will have to address the twin evils. Then there is the serious question of accountability. Almost all major institutions and departments of civil administrations in the state like hospitals, departmental offices, municipal committees, transport and other departments are alien to the process of accountability. Government employees are least mindful of punctuality of time. Administration is unmindful of the fact that a government employee is a public servant and the government is constituted in order to solve the problems of people. Unfortunately government employees, big or small, are under the notion that they have to rule over the people and enjoy the right of governing. Our educational system has collapsed to the extent that from 26 government schools not a single student could go through the matriculation examination. Unless educational system is converted into technical education system, unemployment will increase further.

In other state of India, and also in European countries, some fundamental principles have to be observed while building roads. The material used is always standardized. But our newly built roads are washed down by rain or snow within a year or two. The reason is that 60 % of the budget allotted for the construction of the road goes into the pockets of the contractors and concerned functionaries...

Omar Abdullah will have to address these problems very earnestly. A viable and effective mechanism needs to be devised. The sense and fear of accountability based on justice has to be inculcated among all who are connected with works of public utility and social development like road building, constructions, educational institutions, police and security establishment, medical services etc. Without an effective process of accountability any scheme or mission undertaken even with all honesty is bound to end in failure.

09 March-2009

The Fate of Taliban

Today more looks are focused more on the operation of Pakistani army against the Taliban than on Taliban in Afghanistan. The world media is preoccupied with its details. Taliban did not appear suddenly in the frontier regions of Afghanistan or Pakistan. After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in the war, a sort of civil war broke out in Afghanistan. The unions of *mujahedeen* hitherto engaged in fight against the Soviets broke up. It is to be noted that one union had been formed under the leadership of Hekmatyar and Rabbani in Mecca by the two leaders swearing on the holy Qur'an.

When the union broke, Pakistani Army and ISI formed militia comprising students under study in Pakistani religious seminaries (*madrassah*). They were armed and enabled to seize political power in Afghanistan. As they were the students at the seminaries, they received the name of Taliban. The Taliban destroyed all those institutions in Afghanistan in the name of Islamic system as would have carried Afghanistan along the path of progress. In the name of religious law they appointed pseudo-scholars of *shariat* as judges. This unleashed massacres and oppression throughout Afghanistan.They provided shelter to Al-Qaeda activists thus antagonising the west against them.

Interesting to note that Osama bin Laden the chief of Al-Qaeda had been introduced by the US in the *mujahedeen* war against Soviets and had extended to him frugal support. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US demanded that Osama bin Laden and other ring leaders of Al-Qaeda be handed over to her. General Musharraf then in power in Pakistan tried hard that Taliban accept Washington's demand. But the Taliban would not hand him over with the result that the US decided to attack Afghanistan.

People in the frontier area of Pakistan and Afghanistan are bound by blood relationship also. They descend from Pukhtun ethnicity. With American attack, the Taliban dispersed thinly in the tribal areas of Pakistan like Waziristan, Adam Khel gorge and Bajaur and Tora Bora

Mountains and forests. They set up bases for fighting the NATO and American troops. Al-Qaeda cadres, too, established their bases in these areas. Volunteers that filled the ranks of Al-Qaeda were mostly from Sudan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Chechnia. They were the people who had joined hands in their *jihad* against the Soviets. These people married in local families and established matrimonial alliances. This made Al-Qaeda part of tribal social system. They developed ideological and perceptual commonality.Al-Qaeda managed to secure strong safe havens in the frontier region.

The people in Pakistan's frontier area also began to join hands with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda war against the Americans. The pilot-less drone aircrafts of the US took a leading part in this fighting as they fired missiles on precision targets. Large number of innocent civilians got killed by drone missile attacks. Therefore people joined Taliban ranks in large groups.

Under pressure from the Americans, Pakistani army has begun half-hearted operations against the Taliban and Al-Qaeds since some time. This made the Taliban and Al-Qaeda turn their guns on Pakistan army also. Commentators are of opinion that Pakistani military establishment was not at all prepared to smash the fighting strength of the Taliban. After all the Taliban was the creation of Pakistan's army. Secondly, the Taliban were performing the frontline role in the defence of Pakistan on her western border. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have never been that cordial. Again, Pakistan could stem the growing influence of India with the Afghans only through Taliban. For these reasons Pakistan tried its best that somehow some understanding should be reached with the Taliban. She wanted that this power should survive in Afghanistan to serve her defence interests in the west of Pakistan.

It has also to be noted that Taliban were becoming more popular in Pakistani society because the Taliban were claiming to bring about Islamic system of justice and social order. There are thousands of seminaries in Pakistan. They and a number of militant groups like Jaish-e Muhamamd, Lashkar-e Jhangvi, Jamiat-e-Ulema-e Pakistan, Jamaat-e Islami, and Lashkar-e Tayyaba etc. are all considered pro-Taliban. These organizations are working hard towards Talibanization in Pakistan.

News pouring in from Pakistan speaks of these people having gained tremendous strength in a vast area in Punjab province. It is said that besides conducting military operations in the Frontier region and Swat, Pakistan Army may have to tackle with Punjab also though Pakistani military establishment hopes that situation never arises. Actually Pakistan

had raised these organizations and groups to operate against India. Pakistan would not want to smash the fighting forces it raised against its arch enemy India

Pakistan had concluded a truce with the Taliban and the seniors in Pakistan's frontier province, namely Waziristan. That is why Pakistani army desisted from conducting full-fledged operations in the frontier region which is not under the administrative control of Pakistan. Administration in these areas is run by the political agency system introduced by the British rulers of India. It worked directly under the Governor of NWFP and the local *jirga* system.

This is to say that Pakistan was not directly influenced by the happenings in these areas. But Swat, Dir and Bunner fell directly under the administrative jurisdiction of NWFP of Pakistan. So Pakistan's authority was enforced in these areas. Therefore the insurgency of Taliban posed direct challenge to the sovereignty of Pakistan. Pakistani authorities gave a proof of statesmanship and tried their best to avoid bloodshed. A truce was concluded with Swat Taliban through NWFP administration. Pakistan national assembly ratified it unanimously. Western powers especially the US were critical of this truce and threatened to stop the aid to Pakistan.

As bad luck would have it, Taliban did not honour the truce agreement. After staging demonstrations in Swat, they incited people in adjoining regions and began perpetrating atrocities on them. They bombed schools and shrine. In the name of Islamic law (*shariat*) they began lashing women. They slit throats of many Pakistan army officers, soldiers and Frontier Constabulary personnel with blunt knives. In these circumstances Pakistan army did what any sovereign country would do. It is fighting the Taliban today. I record here a few websites wherein we find some people saying that Taliban are falsely maligned for slitting the throat of victims, lashing women and humiliating Pakistani army personnel, something which the Taliban themselves owned.

1. www.youtube.com
2. http://islamabad-observer.com/2009/04/25/new-leaked-videos-of-taliban beheading

What will be the fate of Taliban and terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan at the hands of Pakistan army, NATO and the Americans is what only the future will tell. President Karzai has denied presence of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. US defence minister Robert Gates also said that Al-Qaeda was centred in Pakistan and not in Afghanistan. History tells us that these people have never been defeated by invading forces. There is every possibility that this war will drag on to a long period and will be

accompanied with great bloodshed. However, there is one redeeming factor. It is that the people of Pakistan stand by her army operations in the infested area and Sunni and *tablighi* groups have declared Al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization.

Greatest sufferers from these operations are the ordinary people. Nearly two million civilians vacated Swat region and took shelter in the NWFP, Mardan and other adjoining areas. They live in camps in a miserable situation. Taliban is Pakistan's own Frankenstein. Today it has become active on its own soil. Pakistan has to bear the brunt. History tells us that whosoever promoted violence and created armed groups, had to fight against them at the end of the day. In India Indira Gandhi had created the extremist group under Bhindranwale and ultimately Indian army had to fight against it which cost Indira Gandhi her life. This has been the fate of Tamil insurgents. India supported them in the beginning and at the end they turned against India. Rajiv Gandhi had to pay with his life. Nearer home, we have the example of Kuka Parrey, Javed Shah and other Ikhwanis (*nabadis*) the creation of Indian agencies, who met with their destruction.

Today the US is engaged in a worldwide confrontation with Al-Qaeda operatives.One fails to understand why people forget that violence breeds more violence.

Our sympathies and prayers are with Pakistan. We wish she steers clear of engulfing crisis. But she will need to take bold steps against those promoting violence and sectarianism. At this point we would draw attention of our readers to a very crucial situation. Pakistan is fighting against the terrorists and western powers and the US are lending their full support to her. Terrorists in such close proximity pose a threat to the entire region including India. It is, therefore, important that India, instead of bringing diplomatic pressures on Pakistan in regard to Kashmir issue, joins hands with Pakistan in a united fight against the Taliban and their sympathising terrorist organizations. It needs to be stated that in the event of Taliban securing an upper hand in the region, will repeat the story of old invaders like Chingiz Khan, Ghaznavis, Khiljis, Timur, Nadir Shah and others who trampled whole of Central Asia under their heels and marched on to the plains of the sub-continent. They are acutely motivated by extremist religious sentiment against India. In such a situation it will be impossible to stem the tide.

Those in Kashmir who, out of sentimentality, raise slogans in support of Taliban should look at the situation in Pakistan and Pakistan's military operations against them. They must remember the massacre, bloodshed,

terror, lashing women and denying them education, destroying schools and shrines and obstructing development, bombing graveyards and holy places etc. is the other name of Taliban. Kashmir's freedom movement is peoples' movement for their rights. It should not be defamed by linking it up with pro-Taliban slogans. India wants this to happen so that she can carry out worldwide propaganda to defame us and thus put an end to our long struggle.

Finally, it is pertinent to reiterate that the US and allied forces should understand that it is not possible to suppress the warlike tribal people through the use of brute force. These people have never been cowed down by an invading force. However, the best way of silencing the turmoil is to draw massive developmental programs and plans that would bring economic revolution in the region. The tribal people have to be sensitised that they need to come out of primitive social and economic structure and derive benefit from a positive, modern and helpful structure without disturbing their traditions and faith. This task needs thinking at very efficient and capable think-tanks level and with the notion that a great reformative service is to be rendered not destruction of a part of humanity that has lagged behind in economic and social development process of civilized nations.

31 May-2009

Is Freedom Movement under obligation of incidents?

On May 29, 2008, two women of one family in Shopian were murdered mysteriously. They were 22 year old daughter-in-law Nilofar and 17-year old daughter Amineh. To the people of Shupian this news came like bolt from blue. Unfortunately local administration mishandled the tragic case. For last two decades it has been observed that the police generally try to link up a criminal case with militancy, be it rape, murder, vendetta or rivalry between two groups. In bringing the onus to the doorsteps of militants, the police tried to absolve itself of the responsibility of identifying the culprits and bringing them to book.

Shupian murder case has not been treated differently. In normal course of things, this murder case should have been investigated considering it a major criminal case. Without applying mental and administrative constraints, the facts of the incident should have been brought to light. Had that been done, then in all probability people would not have reacted as violently as they did and political groups with vested interest would not have seized an opportunity of blowing the event out of proportions to serve their political purpose. Initial post-mortem report of the doctors and the administration tried to give the impression that it was not a case of rape. But the forensic report showed that it was a case of gang rape. It was also said that the bodies of the assassinated women carried deep wounds which did not need certification by a post-mortem report that this was a case of rape. It is not only a case of single or double but of triple crime. In all religions and in all societies of the world, rape is considered the darkest blot on the face of humanity. A rape poses a challenge to the entire society because it poses general threat.Under-aged girl children ask what is rape and molestation.

We fail to understand who the wise advisers are sitting around the young chief minister who hid the facts of this tragic case from him and made him issue a statement that it was a case of drowning and not of rape, and that some people were politicizing it. Chief Minister's statement worked fuel to fire; peoples' anger knew no limits. If the government is not able to provide security to women, then, of course, there will be no dearth of people who would politicize such matters and blow them out of proportion. Geelani Sahib gave a call for strike in connection with Shupian

incident. People protested and pelted stones in the belief that making any sort of demonstration on such an incident was what any self-respecting community was entitled to do. The people in Kashmir have waited for six long decades to find a solution of the tangle. Their struggle also saw many people laying down their lives as martyrs in the struggle. But assault on the modesty of a mother, a sister and a daughter is in no way acceptable. During his election campaign the chief minister had promised to scrap special powers given to the security forces deployed in the state. But later on he himself defended modification in special powers. He had called AFSPA a black law.

The harsh reality is that as long as the camps of security forces exist in the proximity of civilian settlements, incidents like the one happened in Shupian cannot be avoided. The solution is that military camps should be removed from civilian habitats; they must return to the barracks. Internal security duties should continue to be performed by the State police force only. It is obvious that local security forces will make a better show of tolerance and understanding in comparison to forces inducted from outside the state. Local police is a part of Kashmir society.

With tear gas, baton charge and bullets security forces tried to suppress demonstrations made against the incident in Shupian. Hundreds of demonstrators were left wounded. Leaders and activists who had staged these demonstrations were treated brutally and picked up. Even women demonstrators were not spared these atrocities. Security personnel entered private houses, beat the denizens and looted or vandalized their household goods. We know that crimes like rape and murder should not be politicized. But we assert with conviction that it is the government and the establishment that are responsible for politicizing criminal acts in our state because they try to cover them up. However, I feel it necessary to state that PDP chairperson did support the masses of people in this incident no matter whether out of sincere concern for the people or for its political aggrandizement.

Mahbooba Mufti is a respectable lady and she is fully conscious of the magnitude of crimes like rape or murder of innocent women. Therefore if PDP activists came on the roads and raised their voice, it certainly was to give support to the people of Shupian for a just cause. People in or out of India, on seeing PDP leader along with party MLAs in opposition joining vigorously in mass demonstration in Shupian will carry the impression that the crime committed in the town is really of big and of serious magnitude. Their voice reinforces the voice of separatists. I am deeply pained to know that some people called Mehbooba Mufti's demonstrations as shedding crocodile's tears. I would have appreciated if

National Conference in its capacity as a regional political party, too, had decided to participate in demonstrations against the crime. Last year we witnessed protests on the issue of Shrine Board forcing the government to resign. NC sat in opposition at that time, and gave anti-government statements in regard to this issue. Allotment of land to the Shrine Board was made by the coalition government of Congress and PDP, and the leading role in the deal was played by PDP minister of law, Mr. Muzaffar Baig and forest minister Mr.Afzal Qazi. They had silently signed the files. But when the cat was out of bag, PDP tried to safeguard its credibility as a political party and took part in the protest rallies. Certainly, this ran counter to the principles of political ethics. But in Jammu and Kashmir, politics is devoid of morality.

The question that Kashmiri masses and particularly the separatist organizations and leaders have to answer is this: Have we to run the freedom movement on the basis of a few casual incidents or have we to have a definite and well thought of plan for running our movement for the right of self-determination. Be it the Shrine Board incident or the murder of some youth in downtown Srinagar, or the death of a bike rider in a road accident with a civilian or military vehicle, a scandal like the gory incident of rape and murder in Shupian, all these become catalyst for the separatist groups to come out on streets and raise slogans of *azaadi*. Hence we have strikes and protest rallies. For example, after the Shupian incident, Geelani Sahib declared that with this incident there would be complete strike in Kashmir till freedom was obtained. Is this pragmatism? Then he declared to withdraw strikes from Tuesday. In a message to the nation he said that Kashmir would have to bear temporary economic loss because they had no options other than resorting to strikes and shut downs.

I have great regard for Geelani Sahib. I appreciate his call for non-violent protests. This in fact is the only option available to the people in Kashmir. I am led to believe that a change has occurred in the thinking of Geelani Sahib. He is talking of winning the rights of Kashmiris not through gun but through non-violent protests. This is precisely what I have been saying for last twenty years. I am not a supporter of politics of strikes. There are many other patriots who think along the same lines. Out of twenty years of our struggle, six and a half years have been consumed by strikes.India has deliberately deprived the valley of industries. Our deprivation does not affect her economy adversely, and she is content with turning J&K into a consumer state. We have been made dependent on everything in life and death. Those who are adversely affected are the labourers, daily wagers, petty shopkeepers, fruit and vegetable vendors, toiling peasants and bread earners. The biggest sufferer is the student community

because their educational institutions remain closed for weeks at end. This creates big hurdle in their path for competing for professional and administrative examinations on national level. Civil life is disrupted by the strikes; thousands of weddings get cancelled. Candidates appearing for recruitment in higher administrative cadres like IAS, IFS or IPS from Jammu and Ladakh outnumber candidates from Kashmir valley. If this continues the result will be that we shall not have any candidate from the valley in the bureaucratic structure of the state. Strikes for weeks together ultimately crush the poorer and weaker segment of our society. Government employees are happy with the strikes because they receive their salaries without having to attend their duty.

This is the reason why I have been repeatedly exhorting that national freedom movement has to be separated from day to day incidents. We need a well defined programme and we need unity in our cadres. Geelani Sahib is a senior leader and a very elderly person. He should come forward and take bold initiative of forging unity among the leadership. We need a carefully thought plan to follow. We can give a call for symbolic strike when need arises. Black arm bands do symbolize protests; once a week total transport strike can be enforced; one–hour strike can be announced for students in all educational institutions; we can fix a day when the entire nation will come out from their homes and stage a *dharna* on the streets; during rallies we need to discourage violence; we need to take care of essential services like medical aid and municipal services during the hours of strike; we should not tolerate any indecent treatment of tourists; we can convey our grievances to the tourists by distributing leaflets among them so that they are made aware of the genuineness of our cause. We should remember that if we do not have a thoughtful plan and if we do not go along the defined lines, we shall not reach our destination, and contrarily, we shall be carrying more dead bodies to the graveyards and more women will be faced with molestation.

With regret I have to tell the Indian print and electronic media, human rights organizations and political structures that heinous crimes like rape, murder and custodial killings that take place in Kashmir should not be linked to separatism. Had the Indian electronic and print media and conscientious citizenry raised their voice against the tragic happening in Shupian, the people in the valley would have said that Indians have genuine concern for the dignity and self-respect of Kashmiris. A woman is a woman from whatever part of the world she is and deserves to be shown respect. By ignoring to highlight incidents of oppression, crimes, rape and murder, the Indian media and human rights organizations create more disappointment among the people of the valley. 15 June-2009

Burning problems and indifferent administration

With a host of problems looking into eyeball, it is difficult for me to put my finger at a more important one. To add to the misfortune, unlike other democratic countries, here neither any attention is paid to published articles nor does any grievance get redressed. The establishment ignores the views and suggestions appearing in the print media just because it thinks what has passed are not worth paying attention. It is just because of lack of accountability.

Before proceeding with my ideas, I like to pay tribute to Miyan Tufail Ahmad, the former chief of *Jamaat-e Islami,* Pakistan who passed to his heavenly abode last week. The year was probably 1973. Z.A. Bhutto, the autocrat, had interned him in a cell in Kot Lakhpat. I was also put into the same prison in another cell. He was a classical gentleman and his knowledge was vast. This provided me an opportunity of learning like a student much about Islam from him. An ugly incident took place on one night. Some miscreants barged into his cell and misbehaved with him trying to pull his beard. Amidst the hue and cry that ensued, I burst out with all abuses in Punjabi by way of protest against maltreatment of Miyan Sahib. Next day, I was dragged out of my cell and physically assaulted and shifted to another barrack. There was much hue and cry throughout Pakistan on the matter of bad treatment meted out to Miyan Tufail... A kind-hearted man as he was, Miyan Shaib protested vehemently on hearing that I had been shifted to another place. He demanded that I should be brought back to the same barrack.

I have had the opportunity of meeting and knowing many people in Pakistan. I have noted one thing. Despite political differences, the people pay due regard to human and moral values and relations. Let me recount one more incident. In 1993, the *Amir* of Pakistani *Jamaaat-e Islami*, Qazi Altaf Hussain was operated upon in a London hospital. I joined Shaukat Dar to pay a courtesy visit to the recuperating Qazi. At that time Professor Khurshed Ahmad and the Ambassador of Sudan were also present. The Qazi lay on his bed. As I moved forward to shake hands with him he beckoned that he be lifted up a little because a Kashmiri *mujahid* had come to see him. Not only the Qazi, almost all leading political personalities in Pakistan like Maulana Bari, Maulana Alfu'd-Din Turabi,

Ghulam Nabi Fai, right wing politician Altaf Qureshi, Mujibu'r-Rahman Shami, extreme leftist Khan Wali Khan, Attaullah Mengal, late Sher Muhammad Mari and Akbar Bugti all treated me with affection. I learnt a lot from many of these outstanding personalities. The main thing I learnt was to sacrifice everything for one's ideology and develop the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of people.

Permit me to say that politics in J&K is contaminated with poison. Differences in political views are taken as enmity. Be it the mainstream political parties or separatist organizations, what is strikingly visible is that there is no tolerance for the views of other people. After all politics, too, has its evolutionary process. In that process mutual tolerance is of utmost importance. Human and moral aspects are not to be lost sight of while political process is pursued.

Demonstration at Pratap Park staged by the relatives and friends of people who disappeared in police custody brought tears to the eyes of onlookers. Parents, brothers and sisters may try to console themselves on the death of their dear ones. But it is hard to bear the pain of disappearance of a dear one. The relatives and kith and kin do not know what after all happened to the victim. I have touched on this theme a number of times and have also protested against this violation of human rights. It was suggested that a Truth and Reconciliation Commission be instituted to consider custodial disappearance cases. Truth about their disappearance should be brought to their relatives. It is political and moral responsibility of the present government. .A number of cases of excesses against and molestation of women and young girls are reported these days. We do not mean to say that a government can provide foolproof protection to the womenfolk. But the declining moral standard of the society is being increasingly felt at this point of time. In recent months finger of blame has been raised towards some teachers and police officials for making attempts of molesting girl students.

A teacher is supposed to be the beacon light for the student; he is also given the status of a parent of the student. But if the same teacher becomes a molester, then of course, it is a sign of deterioration of society's morals. Police is the protector of the honour of womenfolk. But when it behaves criminally, the society is doomed. True, we do not bring blame to the entire police force or to the entire teaching community. But even a single example is bad enough to taint the entire cadres. It is incumbent upon responsible persons in these services to identify the culprits and thereby help maintain high reputation of services. It is to be remembered that culture, civilization, clean polity, humanism, sifting truth from falsehood and right from wrong and self confidence, all are the

qualities that expain a teacher's personality. He makes us understand what these qualities in truth mean. Unfortunately, our teaching community has become negligent of its duties and responsibilities and has turned this noble profession into business. Their conduct is misleading our boys and girls towards a disastrous direction. The stage has come for the parents to think that by putting their daughters to the institutions of knowledge, they are only endangering their moral standard. This is just because some of the members of teaching staff are wolves in sheep's garb.

Recently many shameful incidents took place at Panzath, Nasu Badrakund, and Wanpoh in Qazi Gund area of South Kashmir and also at some places in North and Central Kashmir in Primary and Middle Schools. The culprit teachers are not working towards modernization of society but the reverse of it. Their bestial mindset can become the cause for imposing a ban on female education. To avoid that situation it is important that proper protection is provided to female students in our educational institutions.

We meet with frequent road accidents in which many precious lives are lost. Many homes are darkened by the icy hand of death. Why do such accidents happen day in and day out? The Chief Minister has lived in Europe. We wish he would import some of the safety rules of western countries into our state. Buses and cars are subjected to annual check. In particular tyres, lamp, indicator, break, steering and other accessories are checked for perfect and accurate functioning because their defective functioning is usually the cause of a road accident. I wonder whether the transport officers and ministers including the chief minister do not see that many vehicles ply with worn out tyres or non-functional indicators and other discrepancies. Bus engines emit thick clouds of smoke that pollutes entire environment. Bus does not stop at fixed stops nor are seats reserved for women commuters. . The driver and the conductor behave badly with the passengers and this scares the women commuters. We often find under-aged persons at the driver's seat. Authorities shun their responsibility by taking shelter behind the excuse that there is unrest in the state.

LAWDA has become a gold mine for some persons with vested interest. The Union minister for water resources together with the Chief Minister recently announced in a press conference allocation of a package of 1100 crore rupees for cleaning and maintenance of Dal and Wular lakes. I may say that like the past experience, the two lakes will remain what they are despite the hefty package as indicated above. Unless 7000 families settled on Dal are not shifted and relocated elsewhere, no cleaning project will at all succeed. Even if the allocated sum is increased ten

times in quantum, still the lake will be what it is at present. As long as LAWDA is there, it remains a gold mine for its officials and contractors. I would suggest that the residual part of the Dal Lake should be put on auction so that it is filled and then good hoses are raised on the available land... This is how the government will get of a headache called Dal Lake: With the funds allocated for the cleaning and maintenance of the Dal, some giant industries should be put up so that young unemployed people gind a source of employment. We know that the hefty amount of 11000 core rupees sanctioned a package will ultimately go into the coffers of those who are shedding crocodile tears in the name of degenerating Dal lake.

06 July-2009

Open Letter to Indian Media

Dear Sir/Madam

Indian media's silence over recent mass uprising in Kashmir has surprised me. There was a continuous curfew for 9 days, civilians participating in peaceful protests were attacked, there was a scarcity of essential goods, political activists were detained, local TV channels and local newspapers were banned, journalists were beaten up and wounded. But the Indian media remained indifferent. In the law suit of Indian Express vs. Union of India (1986), the Supreme Court of India held that "the press plays a very significant role in the democratic machinery". It ruled that freedom of press has three essential elements:

1) Freedom of access to all sources of information,

2) Freedom of publication,

3) Freedom of circulation. In the case of Menka Gandhi vs. Union of India, the Supreme Court eld "the freedom of speech and expression (press freedom is part of this right) has no geographical limitation."

It seems as if these judgments do not apply on Kashmir. The media in Kashmir were subjected to restrictions. But the Indian media, whose freedom of expression is guaranteed by the verdict of the Supreme Court, did not use its tools efficiently to demonstrate solidarity with the media in Kashmir. Was this just because this inalienable right was under suppression in Kashmir and not in Delhi or Mumbai? Was it so just because the journalists injured in the incident represented local newspapers and not major national papers like The Hindustan Times or the Times of India'?

In the country, many TV telecasts and programs are presented with the purpose of making national politics and governance more transparent and accessible to ordinary citizens. Indian media has brought to light many cases of corruption unearthed by accountability committees and investigation processes.. But it has failed to play the same role in Kashmir. Has the Indian media ever thought that violence alone could

not be the cause of corruption, poverty and bad governance? The Indian media has never published anything conveying information on major expenditures incurred in the matter of developmental projects. It has never tried to investigate why the Dal Lake is still a stinking swamp while hundreds of millions of rupees have been spent on its cleaning projects. The Indian media has never tried to discover that almost every government job is given either to a relative of a Minister or is sold for hundreds of thousands of rupees in Kashmir. I would like the Indian media to answer the question why is it so.

Section 167 of the CRPC grants the right to every interned person to be released on bail if no charge sheet is filed against him/her within 90 days of custody. In Kashmir there are numerous detainees who are languishing in jail under the Public Safety Act which allows detention for up to two years without charge or trial on the purported presumption that the arrested may, in the future, commit acts harmful to the state. This law has its origin in the Defense of India Act (DIA) passed during British colonial rule. The DIA was described by Gandhi ji as a draconian and black law. Why isn't the India media reporting this blatant violation of Human Rights and thereby upholding Gandhi ji's moral values? Is Kashmir that hard to find? Amnesty International and other international NGOs do not have any problem in locating Kashmir. They have already published various reports condemning the PSA.as violation of human rights. Again my humble question to the protectors of freedom is: Why is it so?

The number of unemployed youth in Kashmir has risen to over six hundred thousand.. Many of them have University and College degrees. Indian media has been quick to attribute this sky high unemployment rate to militancy. Has the Indian media ever tried to research whether the militancy could be attributed to the high unemployment rate? No report or write-up has ever appeared outlining what the government is doing to bring down the huge number of unemployment. The Kashmiri youth make news and commentaries for the Indian media only when their hands are put in fetters by their oppressors. The India media does think them a worthy subject for discussion when these youth hold the pen with an empty stomach.

Noted columnists like Arundhati Roy, Vir Sanghvi and Swaminathan A. Aiyar have tried to bring the recent developments in Kashmir to the common man in India and made Kashmir's secession a matter of common debate. They defied the mainstream mindset of the Indian media of neglecting the uprising and wrote on the basis of truth and morality. The approach of the mainstream Indian media has proved that the estimate of Reporters without Borders, which ranks India 120th worldwide

in Press Freedom Index, is close to reality.

Life comes to a standstill in India and live telecast is shown on all major channels whenever there is an encounter between militants and security forces. It is quite common that a grenade blast by militants captures the headlines for two days in every national channel and newspaper. This time no grenades or Kalashnikovs were involved. There were a million men, women and children on the streets demanding the right which was promised to them by Indian leaders like Pandit Nehru. Protestors were holding peaceful demonstrations but were still attacked by the security forces which used lathe-charge, teargas and even bullets to suppress and oppress the popular discontent. Even women and children were not spared. People we injured and killed by 'Democracy' and the inheritors of 'Democracy' watched the dance of death like silent spectators. How humiliating for the Kashmiris and how hypocritical and shameless of the Indian media that these events were not good enough to capture the headlines in major newspapers and were not showed on news channels. Is the Indian media afraid that by showing these events in a truthful way it will trigger the same reaction from the Indian people as the reactions of American and French people during the excesses of their security forces in Algeria and Vietnam?

We Kashmiris are also human beings and entitled to some inalienable rights. The duty of the media is to report our wishes, grievances, problems and thoughts in order to provide citizens with information and trigger public debates. It is not the duty of the media to judge whether the wishes, grievances, problems and thoughts are right or wrong or in the national interest of India. The judgment should be left to the people.

Solution of Kashmir issue - Stimulus to peace (Hashim Qureshi's Speach in European Parliament)

10 December 2008, Bruxelles
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to thank Baroness Emma Nicholson on behalf of the Kashmiri people for her commendable and eminent role in creating awareness about the Kashmir problem in Europe and especially among the establishment of the European Union. I would also like to make use of this stage to thank the European Parliament for the fact that it has shown a certain amount of interest in the sufferings of my people, which were unheard for most of the past 60 years.

As far as the recent political developments are concerned, I am of the opinion that the political situation in Kashmir is disastrous. This has formed the base of daily miseries and created a lack of peace. Kashmir can be best compared with a volcano, where an explosive eruption is inevitable. There was such an eruption in June of this year, when millions of Kashmir's came out on the streets to reiterate their demand of Self-Determination, only to be crushed brutally by the establishment. More than 60 peaceful demonstrators were killed and over a thousand were injured. Numerous arrests were carried out in order to prevent a revolution.

But Kashmir's have successfully showed the world that they are fed-up. Fed up by humiliation, fed up by the tortures, fed up by state terrorism, fed up by the violence, fed up by the discrimination and fed up by the continuous rape of their identity and cultural heritage. Whereas the Indian Government has trivialized this exhibition of dissatisfaction, many renowned and respected writers and intellectuals like Arundhati Roy, Vir Sanghvi and Swaminathan Aiyar have tried to bring the recent developments in Kashmir to the common man in India and made Kashmir's secession a matter of common debate. Instead of extending that debate into a political spectrum, the Indian Government called for elections in the State of Jammu & Kashmir.

I agree with the thought that elections are the base of a democratic setup, but elections on their own are not the only ingredient of democracy. The elections in Kashmir are being held simultaneously with imposed curfew. While in one district polling is conducted, other districts are paralyzed by indefinite curfew. Voting is a democratic right, which implies that not

voting is also a democratic right. People advocating for a boycott of the elections on the basis of the recent atrocities committed by security forces in Kashmir are taken into custody and slapped with cases under draconian laws like the Public Safety Act. Democracy is an institution based upon the majorities rule, but in this manner no minority is allowed to exist to keep the public opinion balanced. For the last 5 Fridays the Jamia Masjid has been closed for prayers, because the security forces have sealed the mosque and prohibit people from assembling.

Heavily armed security personnel are seen at polling booths which bears witness to the fact that these elections are conducted in an atmosphere of turbulence. If the Kashmir problem could be solved by holding elections only, then 11 elections were held before the recent one and in one of them Sheikh Abdullah had even derived a heavy mandate when the total voter turnout was almost 80%. Still no solution could be considered, because of the fact that the elections in Kashmir are only a way to assemble governing bodies in order to govern the state. Political parties participating in the elections have over and over again propagated that elections are not the way to solve the Kashmir problem and that they are only participating in the election process to govern the state and provide people basic necessities. Election manifestos in Europe and America contain topics like better roads, better tax policies, and better and more jobs and better education. Whereas election manifestos in Kashmir are an assembly of points which promise roads, jobs, water, electricity and education. After 60 years of holding elections in Kashmir, political parties are not talking of bettering these basic needs like in Europe, they are talking about providing them. 60 years of elections in my country have failed to provide people the basic needs like water, electricity, jobs and education. As a result of these almost 1 million youth, is unemployed in Kashmir.

Kashmir issue can be only be solved by conducive talks between the three parties to the issue. India, Pakistan and Kashmir's should talk together and if one of these parties is left out, the issue will continue to boil. Peace and a solution to the Kashmir issue are necessary for South Asia to flourish and to prevent growing attacks of terrorism like the recent barbaric attack on helpless civilians in Mumbai. We must acknowledge that some radical and fundamental elements in South Asia will continue to justify their inhuman and diseased activities on the fact that Kashmir issue is not yet solved. In this way Kashmir will increase in becoming a reason for terrorism. The fact that people who have abandoned the path of violence are still tortured, humiliated and harassed by the security forces in Kashmir will only contribute to this phenomenon.

I, myself am a living example of this process. I have committed a violent act more than 35 years ago for which I have spent more than 12 years in jail, and I have been preaching peace for the last 25 years, but still I have a case pending against me in India of being a Pakistani agent. It is a cruel irony that I spent 10 years in Pakistani jails because they sentenced me according to their allegation that I am an Indian agent. Even with international constitutional rights like Double Jeopardy, my faith as a Kashmiri is that neither India nor Pakistan will sit still until they both have sentenced me for being an agent of the Kashmiri people. We all should encourage the youth who has left the path of violence instead of pushing them against the wall, so that they, in their frustration, are compelled to seek violence's refuge again.

The fact that Kashmir problem could not be solved in the past 60 years has contributed towards the decline of our culture and its rich heritage. The political turmoil and violence in Kashmir has opened doors of corruption, malpractice and bad governance in recent years. This has resulted into the fact that our lakes are shrinking day by day and are now less than half of their original size. The Dal lake has shrunk from its original 58 sq km to 11 sq km. Wular lake, which once was Asia' largest fresh water lake was 217 sq km in 1911, now it has been reduced to 86.71 sq km. all because of pollution and encroachment. Even the pillar of our culture, Kashmiriyat, has fallen prey to the enemies of peace. Our centuries old custom of tolerance was destroyed when our Pandit brothers left Kashmir. Since that unfortunate event, no government has even tried to formulate a plan for bringing them back. A project of 4000 crores has been initiated to build flats for them in New Delhi. These flats could also be built in Kashmir, so that the Kashmiri Pandits could be given an honorable and dignified return to their motherland.

It is my firm belief that the culture and its heritage cannot be preserved until and unless a political solution is achieved concerning the Kashmir issue. I can say that because the current situation has proved to be a money minting business for some in Kashmir who do not care about human lives, let alone the culture. I would like to add here that although I appreciate the effort to hold this conference in the European Parliament about Kashmir's Cultural Heritage, maybe a conference on the Human Rights Abuses, Disappearances, Unnamed Graves or the denial of freedom of speech or freedom of movement would have been a more appropriate subject during these times of political turmoil. Maybe a conference on such topics conducted in the European Parliament could diplomatically compel India and Pakistan to review their oppressive approach in Kashmir.

The use of war was indeed philosophically described by *Aristotle when he said that war sometimes is necessary and that men make war, so that they can live in peace*. The people of Kashmir are the victims of a proxy war for the last 60 years, yet there seems no peace at the end of the tunnel. The saying of Aristotle does not apply in Kashmir, India and Pakistan are not fighting a war, in order to live in peace. On the contrary, they are ready to continue their war and spent huge amounts of their budget on it just for the sake of so-called prestige. In the meantime they are neglecting the fact that Kashmir as well as their own innocent citizens are suffering from hunger, violence, financial instability, sickness and poverty. The relation between peace and stability can be best compared to the stimulus-response model.

Stability is impossible as long as there is no peace, but peace means more than just the absence of war. Peace means peace of mind and the right to make use of basic human rights without the fear of being prosecuted. Peace means the pursuit of happiness and a climate of freedom. The International community as well as India and Pakistan have made mistakes in the past by concluding that Kashmir is peaceful as soon as violence decreases, only to discover that that so-called peace is just silence before another storm.

I agree with the fact that two major wars in the world, the huge financial crisis and the threat of terrorism have created a sense of political and economical instability in the world. The rapidly spreading consequences of these events throughout the whole world bear witness to the fact that the world has become a small place and that we all are dependent on each other. Time has changed now, and the West cannot afford not to care about what is happening in the East and vice versa. The changing of the world into a Global Village has become more and more reason for us to safeguard stability throughout the world and not just in our own backyards. I am of the opinion that terrorism is one of the biggest challenges humankind needs to win and in order to achieve that, we should change our approach.

The world has recognized that South Asia is a region which is vulnerable to radicalization and fundamentalism, which eventually could be translated into terrorism. As mentioned above, the fact that Pakistan and India are spending huge amounts of their budget just to keep their hostility alive creates elements in their own society who feel either dissatisfied, discriminated or left alone. These elements are an easy prey to radicalization and fundamentalism.

The pending Kashmir issue also contributes to this radicalization process,

as there are many elements in India and Pakistan, who for whatever reason, be it solidarity with the Muslim majority in Kashmir, be it rebellion against injustice in the state or be it just based on political survival, use the Kashmir issue as an excuse to justify terrorism. Therefore finding a solution to the Kashmir problem according to the wishes and aspirations of the majority of the people living in Jammu & Kashmir, which includes Pakistan Administrated Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir Valley, has become a necessity for a peaceful region as well as a peaceful world.

Any solution which is thrust upon the Kashmiri people will eventually have a negative influence and could lead into violent eruptions again. I think that the President Elect of the USA, Mr. Obama, has rightfully observed that solution of the Kashmir issue is the key to peace in South Asia. Hopefully Mr. Obama will consider the wishes of the people of Kashmir when he talks of a solution, because otherwise the whole issue could backfire. The sooner the world recognizes the fact that Kashmir could be the reason for a nuclear conflict or even a third World War, the better it would be for all of us, especially the Kashmiri people.

Before concluding I would like to place a humble request before the European Parliament and its members. Whenever Kosovo, Bosnia and East-Timor are on the agenda, the European Parliament has taken the moral responsibility upon itself to think and act through the perspective of the occupied nations, but whenever Kashmir comes to discussion the international community has always trivialized the issue by saying it is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan.

This has resulted in deep anguish and dissatisfaction among the Kashmiri nation and they have feel neglected by the international community, because of this approach. The international community and especially the European Union should take the moral responsibility to mediate in the Kashmir issue through the perspective of the oppressed Kashmir's and assist them in settling this dispute by granting hem their right of Self-Determination, just like they did in Bosnia, Kosovo and East-Timor. Here I would like to quote a wise saying of Martin Luther King Jr. which should illuminate and inspire us all: *'The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people, but the silence over that by the good people'.* We all are human beings and just like others, we Kashmir's are heirs to some inalienable rights. I would like to appeal to the safeguards of peace and prosperity to consider the genuine demand of my people and act and intervene accordingly.

O! my Leader
FLOWERS OF HOMAGE

Remembering Shaheed Maqbool Butt .Feb. 11 is the anniversary of his Martyrdom.His sacrifice is the beacon light for the Kashmiri freedom struggle.

The passing of eleventh February is a normal and routine day for the world, but for the Kashmiri nation and those human beings who love freedom, sustained struggle, and human values, February 11 is a very auspicious occasion. On 11th February 1984, worshipers of darkness and anti-humanists hanged Maqbool Butt under a well calculated conspiracy to extinguish and destroy the spirit of freedom, he (Maqbool Butt) had instilled in the minds and hearts of the Kashmir's. India thought that by killing Maqbool Butt she could silence the voice of freedom and justice.

But that same morning when Maqbool Butt was executed, the cause of Maqbool Butt was immortalized and his martyrdom became a beacon-tower for Kashmiri freedom fighters who firmly continue their struggle against the tyranny of foreign occupation. The sacred blood of Maqbool Butt, which the oppressor wanted to bury behind the high walls of Tehar jail, has taken rebirth in the form of slogan, stones and swords in every corner of the sub-continent.

"YE KHUN CHICAGO KI SHAHRAHUN SE AZMAT-E E'TIBAR LAYA

YEH HUN FUCHEK KI SHAHRAG SE SHU'URE ID-E-BAHAR LAYA

YE KHUN TAQADDUS'E FATIMI HAI TAJLEEL-E- TUR BAN GAYA HAI

YE KHUN TARIK WADIYUN MAIN MINAR-E-NUR BAN GAYA HAI"

The bloodshed on the roads of Chicago brought Ever-increasing confidence with it.
The bloodshed from the life of Fuchek brought Spring of conscience with it.

The Fatimi blood became more pure and holy and
It has become a beacon-tower in dark and barren valleys."
Oh Maqbool Butt! The cold chains of tyranny could not bind your will to

defy the evil that oppressed your people.

O ! My Leader! You not only sacrificed your life but were also tormented and crucified every moment of your life. You boldly waited for 15 years in the jail cell to enlighten, educate, and awaken your oppressed countrymen and show them the way to national freedom.

You stood up and battled the culture of silence created by the fascism of the occupiers. You broke the silence and spoke out boldly for freedom.

Great Leader! Man has always been obsessed with fulfilling his desires. But you are amongst the few great men who preferred to struggle and risk death for the cause of Kashmir. You sacrificed your life to abort conspiracies aimed at usurping the national freedom of Kashmiri people. The blood-line meant to divide Kashmir, the injustice, illiteracy, poverty and ever-increasing atrocities and oppression in all parts of Jammu & Kashmir are the ills you wanted to fight out and for that you underwent brutalities, oppression, mental and physical torture, solitary confinement and all kind of inhuman treatment like oppression by the barbarians at different times and places.

You bravely faced two - decade long continuous state terrorism in both parts of occupied Kashmir till you were made to embrace martyrdom in Tehar jail on 11th of February 1984.

My Great Leader! You established an unprecedented and unparalleled example in recent history of not only the Kashmiri nation but for the freedom fighters and the oppressed people of the world.

Maqbool Butt, you had rightly defined and voiced that:" *It's far better to die in the field in struggle against illiteracy, poverty and oppression and to achieve glory of humanity while fighting against evil forces than to die in bed.*"

Maqbool Butt: You were a man of strong character; you lived by your word. You exposed those so-called leaders who left no stone unturned in cashing in on the struggle of others and clever enough to run dirty business of their power-politics at the expense of sincere and honest workers. You were successful in boosting up the morale and honour of freedom fighters who offered great sacrifices while fighting against the imperialistic forces and their exploitative system.

You promoted the just cause of revolutionary leaders like Ghazi Chak, Sabz ali Khan, Shams Ali Khan, Fuchak, Peeri Gibril, Bhagat Singh,



Author Hashim Qureshi with his father Late
M. Khalil Qureshi in Pathankot in 1963



From Left Ashraf Qureshi, Maqbool Butt,Hashim Qureshi
Late Ab. Rehman, Late Mir Qayyum and Dr. Gh. Hassan in Lahore,1971



From Left Hashim Qureshi Mr. Jali (Artist) & Ashraf Qureshi
after Hijacking in Feb 1971.



Hashim Qureshi With Potrait of Maqbool Butt Shaheed in
Late Dr. Farooq's House in 1982
Potrait was Hashim Qureshi's Idea.

Hasan Nasar. Che Guevarra. and Hochi Minh.

You didn't take into account the courts which worked as a mouth-piece and spokesman of the exploitative and imperialistic system of the occupiers. When these courts of injustice indicted you, you boldly challenged them and said:" I have neither hatched any conspiracy nor been a part of any such group. My role is clear all the way through. *"However it is true that I have rebelled against obscurantism, slavery, exploitation, corruption, cruelty, and hypocrisy. If the ruling class of Pakistan, which is a product of an imperialist system and is represented by the civil and military bureaucracy, call it conspiracy then I have no hesitation to accept it."*

Martyr of the soil: you see how the foundations of exploitation are collapsing and Kashmir is proud of your great name, your struggle and sacrifice have given birth too many followers of your sacred mission across the motherland who hate slavery, exploitation and illiteracy. Your struggle against exploitation has its roots in French revolution, and freedom movements in Algeria, Vietnam, China, and Cuba and latest examples are Palestine and Chechnya where cruelty, oppression and subjugation are being gradually defeated.

Great Martyr : *Your struggle was not limited and confined only to Kashmir, rather it was against repression and deprivation all over the world - as you said: " The oppressed one comes out victorious in his fight against the oppressor and the building of oppression has to come down sooner or later because of the revolutionary struggle of the masses of the people and I always stood by the side of downtrodden in their fight and struggle against the exploiters .For me this case against us is not unusual at all. During human history whenever exploitation and slavery are challenged the ruling classes have always relied on the word 'conspiracy'. But history proves that in the fight of oppressed against oppressors, eventually the former wins and the oppressive structure is crushed by the revolutionary struggle of the people."*

"I have disliked self-praise but now when my role is being distorted, deliberately, I am forced to claim that at every stage of my life, I have not only supported the peoples struggle against exploitation and oppression but always actively participated in. I have consciously chosen this role for myself because I see it as sunnah of prophets and it is a way of revolutionaries. I have no doubt about the success of this role and the welfare it brings for the people. I cannot refrain from bringing this fact to the notice of this court that apparently only six persons are implicated , the actual motive of this case is to crush our liberation movement."

Respected Leader: Your leadership characteristics were so rich that the workers and colleagues always found you with them in all adverse and happy times. It was your greatness and undisputed personality that no one quitted party or parted ways through the difficult times. It was only possible to learn under your leadership and patronage that: *"Don't doubt someone's struggle, if there exist any differences then try to neutralize them through your struggle and commitment to the real cause ".*

Your sacrifice, incessant struggle and commitment exposed so-called leaders. You educated Kashmiri people to identify and differentiate between real and devoted leaders and those who are mere liars and opportunists. It is a dark and gloomy aspect of Kashmir's national history that the so-called leaders and opportunists even today do not hesitate when they claim to be the successors of your mission despite their unfaithful activities. But it makes no difference as thousands of committed and sincere workers and sons of the land are promoting your mission of justice, freedom and a classless society where human rights are shown due regard.

As you said:

" That freedom and independence is the fate and destination of Jammu Kashmir. Indian rulers or Pakistani generals and bureaucrats cannot enslave Jammu Kashmir for a long time. The so-called courts and their verdicts and decisions did not matter in the past history of national movements and they can't prevent them in future, otherwise the history of nations would be different from todays. If it would be possible to eliminate the evolution of human civilization, culture, democracy and freedom through traditional kangaroo courts, world history would have been void of all revolutions brought about from Adam to date. National movement's decisions can never be made in traditional courts, rather their evolution is bound to take place whereas the courts are part and parcel of the system against which the popular movements gain momentum and as a result of that the historic process continuous and the so-called decisions stand obsolete".

True Leader of the Kashmir's: You were gifted with deep vision and far-sightedness; you could foresee the future, you had a great intellect, you proved your words, you were dubbed Indian and Pakistani agent but you remained committed to your historic mission and great cause and hence proved invalid and wrong the decisions of the traditional kangaroo courts and became the real and undisputed leader and rescuer of the Kashmiri nation.

My dear Leader, you were a kind teacher and preacher as you used to say that :

"Life is not to be lived for oneself rather it should be devoted for achieving great objectives of nations and glory of humanity because personal desires and benefits are less important than collective and national interests ".

Your precious pieces of guidance, I still remember:

"Political and economic liberation of our nation demands incessant struggle and commitment, even lives be sacrificed so that next generation could follow our steps and could live an honourable life with a dignified way - and after death we would re-appear with different names and characters to continue the just struggle ".

"HAM RUH-E-SAFAR HAIN HAMEN NAAMUN SE NA PAHCHAN
KAL KISI AUR NAAM SE AAJA'YEN GAY HAM LOGE"

"Don't identify us with our names we are the travelling souls,
Tomorrow we will appear with other names."

Today, the world witnesses that Ishfaq Majid Wani, Ejaz, Altaf Qureshi and thousands of other martyrs offered their lives and became Maqbool Butts to fight and successfully promote the cause of national liberation movement in Kashmir with a conviction that Kashmiri nation irrespective of caste, colour and creed will get rid of political and economic slavery of foreign subjugators.

Maqbool Butt - leader of the Kashmiri nation - you once in a public meeting in Mirpur had uttered two precious wise sayings:

"I can't be unjust to history, I would like to make it clear to you that regarding our problems which include wheat or educational problems to national political independence, until and unless people of Jammu Kashmir, themselves command and lead it they will not succeed. It is the verdict of nature and history even. I'm here to give up this struggle if anybody from you comes up with a single example from nation's history, that any other nation of the world had fought, or lead freedom movement of another. No, never. But unfortunately, Kashmiri leadership always looked forward to others to organize and lead their movement (contrary to the wishes and aspirations of common Kashmiri people). Hence, loosing the image and status of a nation interested to be recognized as united

under indigenous leadership and command."

On another occasion, you said: "Any organization or individual attempting to carry out independence movement in Kashmir on the basis of sect and religion will be deemed as an arch enemy of the nation, because it will lead to the division of the Motherland - where ethnic, linguistic and sectarian disputes and clashes will undermine the national unity and character - ultimate output of which is constant turmoil and infighting and an ideal situation for foreign subjugators to continue their direct and indirect rule and oppression. Kashmir's freedom movement based on sectarianism and religion can't muster international support whether it is launched at the behest of "secular India" or Islamic Pakistan. The only way to achieve national freedom for Kashmir is to demonstrate as United Nation of Jammu Kashmir."

My true and visionary Leader: Today opportunists, narrow-minded and short-sighted leaders are exploiting the sacrifices of innocent Kashmir's. Now, the people from the devastated and war-torn Srinagar are called *muhajir* (refugee) living in other parts of Kashmir. The dirty game of drawing petty advantages and benefits from the sacrifices of martyrs and from sufferings of the bereaved families is in full swing. How truthful you were when you said: *"It is easy to talk about freedom. But it needs a lot more courage and patience to fight for freedom. It is a path where every turn is full of tests. You go through such stages where your own friends on whom you relied, don't want to know you for their vested interests. They, even, leave you and make alliances with enemies."*

My Light Of Sense, My Leader: So-called leaders who are enemies of our nation are trying to sabotage our cause. I have not forgotten what you said: *"The military rulers of Pakistan never supported a peoples' armed struggle in Kashmir. They hated it as much as the Muslims hated pork. It is this hatred of military rulers towards peoples' armed struggle, which has made me and my comrades the target of brutal torture and humiliation."*

My martyred leader: those following your foot-steps, true nationalists are suffering in the same way as had happened with you in your whole life. The righteous and moderate are being blamed the same way it had happened to you. But, my choicest leader, I have taken an oath before you that I will remain loyal to your ideology and just struggle of guiding the oppressed Kashmir's till truth prevails.

"JO SHIKASTAH FASH AJAL KO DE,
WUH QATILE TEGHE JAFA HAI TU
TU AUR TERE YAAD SHAME HAYAT HAIN,
KIH SHAHEDE RAHI WAFA HAI TU"

"You are a sacred sword that inflicts complete defeat on death,
your memory is a candle of life, O, martyr of truth."

Oh, Martyr Maqbool Butt- You awakened in us a thirst for freedom, an awareness of truth, and a will to struggle for a better tomorrow. We will always remember you and hold strong to your example.

Why Kashmirs revolted against India?

Political reasons

Despite the division of the Indian sub-continent on the basis of two-nations theory in 1947, Kashmiris stuck to their age-old tradition of communal harmony and saw to it that the virus of communal violence did not undermine that tradition. This made Gandhi Ji concede that he could see a ray of hope in Kashmir.

Maharaja Hari Singh had concluded a stand-still agreement with Pakistan soon after the two dominions came into being. Despite this, the tribesmen with logistical support from Pakistan, made an incursion into Kashmir and endangered her quest for freedom. Even then the people of Kashmir maintained their cool and were not swayed by communal frenzy that had carried astray many people in the subcontinent. They categorically declared their intention of preserving their identity and future course that had become clear for more than three decades in the past.

The support given by the Indian leadership in pre-independence era to the national movement of Kashmiris against the autocratic rule of the Maharaja of the State had given the Indian leadership credibility in the eyes of Kashmiris. They found India championing their case at the United Nations against their aggressors. This was also a clear proof that India respected Kashmir's right for self-determination.

Even the tallest among the Indian leaders, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru said in a public speech in Lal Chowk, Srinagar soon after the beginning of hostilities with Pakistan that " the peopole of Kashmir were not dumb driven cattle whom either India or Pakistan could drive to a destination of their choosing." He said " they were human beings and enjoyed their right to self-determination."

This commitment made by Indian leadership became the basis for the UN resolutions of 1948 and 1949 according to which Pakistan was to withdraw all her fighting forces from PoK to be followed by India pulling

back the bulk of her forces from Kashmir and the governance of the original State of Jammu and Kashmir remaining concentrated in Srinagar administration. The UN was then to supervise the holding of plebiscite in the State.These developments strengthened the faith of Kashmiris in the Indian stand because it recognized their stand for self-determination. Kashmiris trusted India as their friend and well-wisher. A sound basis of mutual understanding on ideological basis was created.

Identity in peril

These promises and perceptions were still in process when India dealt a damaging blow to the entire structure by removing the populist leadership of Kashmir on charges that could never be substantiated., New Delhi installed a handpicked regime in Srinagar in 1953.

The replaced regime and the subsequent ones could not be anything more than surrogates carrying on the diktat of New Delhi. A breach of trust was suspected by the Kashmiris with serious dimensions if the drift was not arrested.This was a political blunder of far-reaching consequences.

The incoming regimes after the removal of the most popular Kashmiri leadership onwards of 1953, gradually gave rise to New Delhi's increasing dependence on their own stooges. In this scenario, it was natural that the bolstered local leadership grabbed power through means fair and foul only to became despotic and imperious. Helpless masses watched the emerging situation much to their disappointment and disbelief.

The Kashmiris felt tht their identity was threatened with erosion and their credibility in India's genuine concern for the Kashmiris built over the years had become only fragile. Another blow came when in the later part of 1960s, a segment of NC leadership made a big but highly controversial policy decision of converting National Conference into Indian National Congress. A small but influential pro-India group had grabbed power in Srinagar after it managed to ease out Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad in 1963. The first reverberation of this struggle for power was to be witnessed in the dislocation of the holy relic in Hazratbal. The entire Kashmiri community had been stunned and shocked by this indecent act. Many years later, people in Kashmir came to know of the perfidy of local political leadership in inciting religious feelings. Perhaps this could be considered a crucial stage in the evolution of armed militancy in the whole of Kashmir beginning early 1990.

Conversion of National Conference into Indian National Congress (I) in late 1960s meant closing a glorious chapter of Kashmir's national struggle for freedom. This further strengthened the hands of political blackmailers. Knowing well that they were moving against the tide of the time, Kashmir Congress leadership adopted a clear - cut double policy vis--a-vis New Delhi and the masses of people in Kashmir. Its promoters and propagators claimed they were outright Indians carrying the cross of nationalism. But in the eyes of common Kashmiris, they remained suspect and undependable. Congress (I) did not miss the political antics of Kashmir political leadership of hunting with the hound and running with the hare. By and large, common Kashmiris remained isolated from the national mainstream owing to local exigencies of their special problems.

It is to be pointed out that in 1965, our neighbour tried to distabilise peace and order in Kashmir by infiltrating regular troops under the name of *mujahideen*. It goes to the credit of secular-minded and peacea-loving people of Kashmir that they did not extend their support to this conspiracy.

Retracing the step

By the time, Indo-Pak war of 1971 came to an end and the ground situation in the subcontinent changed substantially, both New Delhi and traditional political leadership in Kashmir felt that the time had come when steps for reconciliation needed to be taken.Thus came into being the 1974 Indira Gandhi - Sheikh Abdullah Accord, another watermark in the current political history of Kashmir. More than a million Kashmiris gave the Sheikh a tumultous reception in Srinagar after signing the Accord. When he asked the mamoth gathering whether the Accord was acceptable to them, the multitudes raised the famous slogan which became history. They said in Kashmiri " *aleh kareh wangan karen, bab kareh bab kareh*" (whatever the patriarch does is acceptable to us absolutely). The people of Kashmir again proved that they wanted to be treated with dignity and respect in the matter of their relations and affairs with India.

Nowhere in the history of democratic world do we find a ruling political party (Congress in the present case) with a strong majority in the Legislative Assembly surrendering power to a person at that time totally outside the pale of political structure in the State. Sheikh Abdullah was not even a member of the Legislative Assembly. This was done with the unanimous agreement of the sitting members in the Assembly. But within a couple of months, the same party tried to bring a vote of no-confidence

against the person whom it alone had catapulted into the seat of power. The Sheikh outmanouevered them and kept himself stay put in the seat of power.

The Sheikh agreed to disband the Plebiscite Front towards which Kashmiris had expressed their sympathy. But the enrolement of the disbanded cadres of Plebiscite Front into the National Conference gave rise to speculations that New Delhi was trying to follow the colonial text book formula of divide and rule. Two parties, the NC and the Congress in Kashmir began trading accusations and counter-accusations with Sheikh Abdullah calling the Congressites as pests and dirty insects in the drain. Kashmiris began suspecting them all.

Betrayal

Can any self-respecting people pocket such insults? Did these happenings in Kashmir really reflect the words of Nehru uttered by him in a public gathering in Lal Chowk years ago? Kashmiris had reasons to believe that New Delhi was interested only in imposing its surrogates on them. They were convinced that enormous funds provided by New Delhi in the name of development of Kashmir were allowed to be siphoned away to surrogates under the rubric of different plans and programmes. A class of politicos and bureaucrats had formed the nexus to perpetrate general loot of Kashmir.

When under Sadiq's Congress (I) rule, nearly twenty-eight MLAs of the State called on Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and placed before her the facts pertaining to misrule of Sadiq's Congress government, Indira Gandhi threatened to dissolve the State Legislative Assembly and warned that none of the MLAs comprising the delegation would find himself re-elected.

Yet the Kashmiris bore this with fortitude hoping that good sense would prevail on Indian leadership.When the Sheikh died in 1984, two million people joined the funeral procession. In a broadcast about the event, the BBC said that only President Nasser's funeral in Egypt could be compared with it.

His son Dr. Farooq Abdullah stepped into his shoes. This was done under the close watch of Indian political leadership. Yet the people accepted the arrangement in the hope that a chance could be given to the young leader to grasp the complexities of Kashmir politics. He had hardly been allowed a year to be in office, when behind the curtain intrigues and

conspiracies were hatched to replace him. The text book formula of divide and rule could take any shape and dimension. At this junctutre, his brother-in-law, with whom he was at daggers drawn, was made to hijack some of the ministers in Farooq's Council of Ministers and some MLAs along with them and he was shown the door.

This sordid act of stabbing in the back left Kashmiris totally disillusioned. Regrets and disillusionment gradually gave place to resentment, distancing, hatred and alienation. Kashmiri youth in particular listened to and carried home the message which Pakistan as an adversary of India had to convey at these crucial junctures. They exploited the situation to their maximum benefit. Kashmiri youth now decided to take a decisive step which was of giving strong political fight to the surrogates and stooges. They decided to establish the will of the people by rejecting the self-seeking political leaders who had dominated the Kashmir scene for last four decades.

Dissenters unite

Thus in the impending elections of 1986-87, all the dissenting elements came together and formed the well-known Muslim United Front (MUF). It should be remembered that the constituent elements of the Front had previously fought elections on their own after taking oath of allegiance to the Indian Constitution and had become a party to the enacting of laws for the land through normal procedures. Now they and their activists were resolved to capture political power and bring in an era of radical reforms in Kashmir polity.

MUF workers and leaders made a gallant effot of fielding their candidates, providing proper support structure and carrying on active campaigns to win as many seats as possible in the Assembly. The Jamaat-e-Islami was in the forefront with a widespread netweork which it had set up in rural and urban

segments of Kashmir. But the elections were rigged by the NC - Congress combine in accordance with Rajiv Gandhi's - Farooq Abdullah Accord. The MUF was left with just six seats. MUF's raising of hue and cry against rigged elections made no impact on the Election Commission and the NC-Congress combine returned to the corridors of power to strike with bitter vengeance.

This was the beginning of a very crucial turn in Kashmir politics. The MUF electioneering had caused consternation among traditional political

parties, NC in particular. This was so because the NC never allowed the culture of healthy opposition to grow in the political history of Kashmir. Even those criticising the government for its failure on economic front were not tolerated and dubbed as Indian intelligence agents. The MUF workers were beaten, manhandled, humiliated and disparaged.

These somewhat outcast elements rallied into a formidable force that became the bedrock of ongoing Kahmir movement. All the workers and leaders of MUF of 1986-87 elections are in the frontline of armed militancy in Kashmir. They are convinced that the curse lies in New Delhi and not at any other place. Therefore the emergence of armed revolt of Kashmiris becomes a reality.

Misleading the minority

Yet one more aspect of political reasons needs to be elaborated. Though Kashmiris have a glorious record of communal harmony, yet this was sought to be disrupted by some unwise steps of the Government of India. It patronized the political stooges and groups funding them lavishly and turning Nelson's eye to their gross mismanagement. Along with this, they infuriated the local population by encouraging Kashmiri minorities in a way as if the majority community had a score to settle with India. By creating hurdles in the path of the members of majority community in Kashmir to find entry into central organisations, their sense of alienation was sharpened. It was a question of doubting their loyalty. New Delhi always behaved in a manner as if only a few politicians and families of their connection were pro-Indians and the rest were not and thus could be written off. Instead of ensuring the use of enormous funds in developmental projects in Kashmir, New Delhi remained complacent with her favoured few who feasted on the spoils to their hearts content.

Now the marginalised Kashmiri youth was left with no choice but to take up arms. Pakistan was watching the situation and exploited it fully by providing the youth training in her training camps and equipping them with arms and ammunition. The insurgency increased rapidly in the length and breadth of Kashmir. The elected government resigned and its stalwarts ran away from the scene seeking shelter in different parts of India and abroad. They did not face it politically because they had no political base in Kashmir. They were imposed by New Delhi which had now to bear the brunt directly.

Handling militancy

Handling of Kashmir militancy by the Indian political leadership betrayed sings of immaturity and inexperience particularly of Kashmir affairs. Instead of handling it politically, they resorted to the use of brute force aginst the common people. Brutal suppression of a civilian revolt through muscle power, indiscriminate killing of civilinas in many places, arson and rape became the weapons used by the uncontrollable security forces. Extra-judicial killings in Kashmir by the security forces is an open truth and has been recorded by foreign as well as Indian human rights acativists.

This provided Pakistan with grist to its anti-India propganda. It could mould the world opinion against oporessive measures of Indian security forces in Kashmir. Thus on international plane, India was faced with another formidable detractor. Even the most impartial reports say that 25,000 to 35,000 Kashmiris were killed during the one decade of turmoil.

Old game again

Yet in the face of this crime against humanity, the Indian leadership did not learn to abide by the wishes of the people. Without taking the people into confidence and creating a conducive atmosphere, or addressing their aspirations and wishes, New Delhi once again decided to hold the elections in 1996. The run-aways were facilitated to come back on the scene because it suited the Indian leadership. Again the same traditional political party was placed in power that could be held reponsible for many ills. Has this party been able to deliver goods? Alienation of Kashmiris has deepened in these three years and militancy has exacerbated in proportion. The net result is that the Kashmiris are getting killed and Kashamir is getting destroyed. As all this is happening, the NC leaders and their cronies are raising private properties worth crores of rupees in Jammu city. During three years of NC rule, Kashmir has met with total deterioration in all spheres, economic, political, social and psychological. With financial crunch leading to non-payment of salaries of government employees for months together, 16-hour a- day power cuts, recession of market, major projects starving for want of funds, militancy spreading to more areas, unemployment of youth on an increase, court cases pending for decades at a stretch, extra-judicial killings going on, intermittant assaults on press and its freedom, sharp rise in crime and controversial statements by responsible ministers and MLAs and party leaders, all indicate that the NC government is indirectly making the task of ISI easy in Kashmir. As the situation goes from bad to worse, Kashmiris get more

alienated and more hatred comes to sit against India.

Economic causes

Deficit State

Deficit state by and large, governments in J&K State have never had a smooth sailing in regard to their financial relations with New Delhi. J&K is a deficit state because a large part of its territory is mountainous with not too easy lines of communication. It cannot generate funds enough to meet its developmental plans. As such, the State had to depend on financial assistance in the shape of grants, loans and allocations from the Centre. But there has been a system and a criterian for making financial assistance available. The main reason for irritation on this count is that the State governments have not been able to generate self-employing opportunities through industrialisation. At the same time, providng free education to the youth of the State upto the post- graduate standard churned out enormous number of educated people who could not find the jobs commensurate with their educational qualifications. While the education took more and more youth into its ambit, job opportunities remained limited. This phenomenon was bound to create unrest among the youth one day.

Indian authorities failed to understand the strategic importance of Kashmir, the state whose boundaries touched with the boundaries of five countries. Besides that, the disputed nature of the state made it always vulnerable to the inroads of India's detractors either in terms of physical violation of her sovereignty or in terms of damaging her image on international plane. Wisdom and foresight demanded that emergence of a situation like that should have been forestalled at any cost. The way out was of paying special attention to the industrialisation and mechanisation of Kashmir. The way was to provide the requisite infrastructure without wasting time. This should have been a permanent, positive and unalterable base of New Delhi's Kashmir policy that no government could change or ignore. A piecemeal treatment to economic imperatives was disastrous.

The biggest blunder of New Delhi was essentially political but spilling over to economics. New Delhi has always given more weight to a few persons and families with strong political linkages than to the people in general in Kashmir. No doubt enormous funds have been poured into the state over the years, but it is also a fact that a large portion of these funds was misappropriated by the elements that basked under the patronage of

Indian political leadership. Absence of accountability added to the corruption syndrome. The poor, unemployed and deprived masses began to get reconciled to the situation because their loud protests from time to time yielded no positive results. New Delhi thought it was keeping Kashmir with it by keeping the 22 top families of Srinagar contented and satisfied.

Communication

Two areas should have received highest priority in the matter of bringing economic prosperity to the state. These were communication and energy. In the case of communication, we all know that there is only one overland route that connects Kashmir and Ladakh regions with Jammu region and then to the rest of India. One need not elaborate strategic and political importance of this link. In order to streamline overland communication, the Banihal road should have been converted into a two - way highway that would be operative in all seasons. It would be a mountain highway and the area is snowbound for many months in the year. But western road building technology has surmounted all these difficulties and given a new concept to highland transportation.The other requirement was to provide an alternative link to supplement the main highway. When roads are built, destiny of the people is changed. Three successive Prime Ministers of India laid the foundation stone for a rail link between Jammu and Srinagar but not a single mile of railway line has come up beyond Jammu . If the project of rail and road link was undertaken with a minimum of fifteen kilometers a year, by now the entire link upto Ladakh would have been completed..

Within just two decades of close friendship with China, Pakistan was able to build the Karakorum Highway. crossing the Himalayan pass of Khunjarab at a height of 17,000 feet to connect Beijing with Karachi. But India could not build a highway between Jammu and Ladakh, a bare four hundred miles stretch, for fifty long years. We need not lay emphasis on the importance of roads in transforming economic condition of a backward people. Why did New Delhi ignore this vital aspect? Is it the avowed policy of the Government of India to go slow with urgent and crucial developmental programmes in Kashmir because it is a disputed territory? If that is the conviction, then they should have no regrets for what they are facing in Kashmir today. Why then, instead of getting innocent people and security personnel killed aimlessly, New Delhi did not let Kashmiris manage their affairs themselves without any relation with India?

The State Government did announce the building of an alternate road linking the two segments across the Pir Panchal. This is known as the Mughal route. But the project remained on paper for decades and now is being taken up only half-heartedly.The pace with which work goes on the project would take it a century to complete. Along this Mughal route lies a very strategic area. Alas even from security and strategic point of view, the importance and necessity of building the road in shortest possible time is not taken into account, leave aside its economic importance. If the project of laying the railway line from Qazigund to Baramulla in Kashmir valley has been taken up now, but at what cost? Should it not have been undertaken three or four decades ago?

Electric power

In regard to power production, the world knows that Jammu and Kashmir State is endowed with abundance of water resources that could sustain production of hydel power not only for the entire state but also to other neighbouring states on commercial basis. With more than half a dozen mega hydel power projects taken in hand decades ago, the entire state today remains plunged in darkness for more than 16 hours a day. Corruption, inefficiency, red tapism, lack of sense of responsibility and absence of accountability, all have combined to fail the government and the people with regard to

production of adequate quantum of power. Even technical profeciency of the engineers assigned to these projects is doubted by many commentators. Favouritism in admission to engineering colleges, in appointments of engineers and their posting at lucrative places also contributed to the sorry state of things.

Except for three tehsils of Jammu region, the entire state has cold and snowy climatic conditions. The prosperity and economic development of the people in cold regions in particular is closely related to the availability of low cost and abundant supply of electricity. In Kashmir and Ladakh regions, there is only one-crop season. This means that for more than six months the people have to spend an indoor life. In absence of cottage and small scale industries on a wide scale, in absence of proper engagemnt of the people in indoor productive enterprises, economic condition of the state could not be changed.Take the case of Japan. Every house is a small manufacturing unit. Why could not this be envisioned by policy planners in New Delhi in regard to Kashmir? It should be remembered that the key to winning the people of Kashmir lies in providing cheap and regular electric power for all purposes.

Investment neglected

A general trend of Indian investors and private sector leadership has been to be less enthusiastic about investment and industrialization of Kashmir. How on earth can we imagine of eradicating poverty, illiteracy, and backwardness without caring to develop industries and industrial infrastructure? Indian industrialists were never enticed to invest in Kashmir. Kashmir's industrialisation remained subservient to political considerations more than what it should have been.The result is that the Kashmiri youth, especially the educated youth, became a large army of unemployed young men ready to respond to any call given from any quarter to defy the authority of the regimes. Total absence of industries deprives the society of developing work culture and trade unionism in which economic and material pursuits sharpen people's understanding. Kashmir has remained far removed from mechanisation.

Agro-industry

In agricuture and horticulture industries, the second mainstay of Kashmir economy, no effective steps have been taken to ameliorate the condition of those who are enchained to agrarian pursuits. Innovations and researches into agriculture activities and productions are nowhere in sight. We do not have even workshops where standard agariculture tools and implements could have been forged as supplement to agricultural reform schemes. Often crops fail because of pests and other debilities that have been largely overcome in the developed countries. Our irrigation system has neither been modified nor modernized. Despite enormous water resources, a large portion of cultivated area called *kandi* remains choked for want of irrigation. The tube-well technology is absent in the State not only because power is not available but also because there is no urge to bring a radical change to old and obsolete life style of poor peasantry. Holland is one-fifth of the State of Jammu & Kashmir with most of the land reclaimed from the sea. It has made progress in diary farming to the extent that Dutch milk and milk products are available in all major markets of the world. Despite being a cold country like Kashmir Valley and the adjoining region, Holland produces all kinds of fruit and vegetables in the green houses round the year.

The story of horticulture is too sordid to recount. Kashmir was once reputed for its luscent fruits. Kashmir apple had won the appreciation from people far and wide. But Kashmir horticulture is faced with disaster caused by pests and scabs. It is so sad that despite having two agricultural universities in the State and more than a hundred of them in

other parts of India, a pesticide that could control the scab of apple could not be developed by our scientists. The result is that hundreds of thosands of acres of apple orchards have been destroyed and devastated. For quite sometime the stories of corruption in the department and adulteration of pesticides were galore. Very few people are hopeful that the horticulture industry would meet with its revival in Kashmir.

First Himachal Pradesh emerged as a formidable rival in the industry and then came scams and corruptions paralysing entire industry. The Cadburys, known throughout the world for its jam and juice production had floated a plan for Kashmir to collect the fruit and convert it into jams and juices which would have helped horticulturists benefit immensely from the industry. This was conceived in view of a tremendous waste of apple crop for lack of proper technical assistance. But unfortunately, New Delhi based rich brokers, State bureaucracy and political leadership formed a nexus to defeat the project. This happened because there was no industarial, agrarian and other economic policy parametes drawn after considerable thought.

Forests

Kashmir's rich forests are her greatest asset. But this asset needed to put on modern lines of development. Instead, the antidated system of allowing fraudulent forest lesses to exploit Kashmir's forest wealth has deprived the people of a potential source of income. Proper utilisation of timber for commercial use and aforestation ought to have gone together hand in hand. Today Kashmir's forest wealth has dwindled enormously because of rampant corruption. Prefabrication and processing of constructional material has never been undertaken, which would have provided means of livelihood to many people and standardized the constructional patterns. Waste of precious timber should have been avoided. In the name of social forestry, enormous funds have been misappropriated with hardly any useful result. Deforestation has adversely affected the climate and ecology of Kashmir. Golf fields are usually made on barren lands so that turfing it would bring some verdure. The unfortunate Kashmiris have been deprived of green patches within the city and turned into Golf fields only to satisfy the whims of a handful of politicians and bureaucrats.

France has a significant income from its excellent wines exported to various countries in the world. Kashmir, too, had the suitable climate and soil for developing vineyards and producing grapes for making wine. The

argument that handling of wine is a religius taboo does not hold good. Morocco and Tunisia produce good wines and a large part of their inncome comes from the production and export of excellent wines.

Holland occupies the pride of place in producing the most beautiful flowers and exports these to foreign countries earning foreign exchange to the tune of 2.5 billion dollars a year. Floriculture exhibition ground in Holland spread over 30 acres of land is credited with all species of flowers existing in the world. Nearly four million people from all parts of the world travel to Holland each year to visit this unique feat of floriculture in the months of April and May. Then the flowers are exported to foreign countries which brings foreign exchange of billions of dollars. This industry has flourished in a way to give Holland the rightly deserved fame. We have far better climate and weather conditions in Kashmir to learn from Dutch experiment. But never has any attention been paid to it.

Self-reliance

Could not Kashmir export the bulk of bottled mineral water and earn thereby if that industry had been developed on scientific lines. It is not an expensive enterprise and could have been easily left to private sector. Its establishment did not need enormous funding as in the case of other industries. One is taken aback on seeing a Kashmiri buying himself a bottle of mineral water for twelve rupees a-piece while the springs of finest water in his homeland in Kashmir remain untapped. Kashmir has the potential of supplying mineral water to the subcontinent.

Kashmir's climate and topography are highly suited for herbiculture. Even the innumerable kinds of herbs that grow in her pastures and meadows, in forsts and in plains have never been made a subject of research by medical practitioners. Herbiculture is an industry in which Kashmir should have been leading the country today. This would have substantially improved income to the state exchequer and productively employed a sizeable section of our farmers. India with a vast potential for developing technological infrastructure could have and should have established production of components of small and precision tools industry in Jammu and Kashmir.

In short, India slept over her responsibilities in Kashmir, allowed the anti-India trend gain strength and become strong enough to challenge the authority of the state. People in Kashmir were yearning for a radical change in the life style but had remained entwined in an obsolete and outdated style. There was the urge to enter the new world of new ideas

and new styles; the age of science and technological advancement. They wanted to get rid of all that had tied them down to economic backwardness, social deprivation and political instability.

Ecology and environment

Evironmental disaster

An assault on Kashmir's wonderful ecology and environment was allowed by vested politicians in Srinagar and in New Delhi. Any sincere dedication to the welfare of Kashmir and her people would have disallowed destruction of this ecology. Dal Lake, with 28 sq kilometer area in 1947 has now shrunk to 14 kms. Politicians allowed the encroachers to set up shabby and ugly settlements because of vote bank syndrome. The once crystal clear waters of the Dal Lake have been polluted beyond recognition. In the name of cleaning of Dal Lake, widespread corruption and embzzlement of funds was allowed to gratify politically influential persons. Plantation skirting the Wular lake has been destroyed by firewood contractors and once beutiful landscape is now turned into swamp and marshes. Indiscriminate fishing in the Wular has adversely affected the environment and fish population. Shanties and huts have come up in large numbers along the banks of the Wular lake thus making the sight look ugly and offensive. Illogical deforestation has denuded Kashmir of her natural wealth and beauty. The bed of Jhelum has been converted into slum and the repository of the city's refuse and litter. In short, Kashmir's environment is defiled day after day, and there is every possibility that no visitor would be willing to spend his holidays and money in Kashmir. It is a direct threat to the tourist industry of the State.

Kashmir handicrafts so renowned in the world, have lost their credibility in the world market. This is because substandard material like art silk (staple) was allowed to be used which was not acceptable to foreign buyers. The government had not any definite commercial policy to make Kashmir handicraft like carpets, shawls, wood carving, papier mache and metal work, gradually change over t o modern concepts and face the competition in the world markets.

Conclusion

There could be many more things to discuss. The essential point is that keeping in view the special relations of Kashmir with the Indian Union, it was highly desirable for the Indian policy planners to take these aspects into consideration and make these as strong instruments to keep the

people of Kashmir satisfied. The temporary accession made by the Maharaja might have been ratified by the common people of Kashmir voluntarily and not under any pressure.

The question is that in the light of what has been said above, what could be the basis on which the Indians would want the people of the State to remain associated with them?

This is the picture of the part of Kashmir ruled by India. The story of the other part under Pakistani rule is much more sorded. Its full picture has been given in my article entitled " Why Azad Kashmir be called Pakistan occupied Kashmir?" and " Kashmir Accession to Pakistan: its inviability." This is explained by an Urdu saying, " *bare miyan to bare miyan; chhote miyan Subhan Allah"* (The elder brother is what he is but the younger one is steps ahead of him)

Kashmir:

India's bilateral talk: China's new stand

On international level as well as within India, there is sudden spurt in focusing on the solution of Kashmir problem. In this write-up I intend to reflect on two aspects, namely China's new stand on Kashmir and the willingness of the Indian Home Minister and Prime Minister to pursue talks with the separatist groups.

Bilateral dialogue

These days much is said about bilateral talk. Indian leaders speak of dialogue with various groups in Kashmir. The Indian Home Minister has spoken of not making the content of the dialogue public. It is said that during his recent visit, the APHC (Omar Group)had a secret meeting with him. The Indian Prime Minister said during his visit to Thailand "That there existed some groups in the state that fell outside the mainstream politics and that he would like they were included in constructive dialogue."

Analysing this statement, one is drawn to the conclusion that in talks with them, these groups are goaded into accepting a dialogue about accession to the Indian Union in the manner in which the mainstream parties profess.A vigorous propaganda is being made about developmental works undertaken in the State. India is providing billions of rupees in aid to these developmental enterprises. A general impression among the people is that one half of what India actually gives to Kashmir in the name of developmental works goes to the coffers of the mainstream politicians, workers and their kith and kin. From all sides we hear that general loot of funds is perpetrated in the name of development. Roads, bridges, drainage and other constructions freshly undertaken do not last beyond six months. Engineers in public works departments are said to be amassing crores of rupees annually. Apart from them, those who sanction contracts and the ministers and their lackeys seek enormous kickbacks to give contracts to their close relatives and friends.

A baffling question is whether the works listed under developmental

activities should be called by that name if these do not help provide employment opportunities to the deserving people. Are these to be called developmental activities if they do not bring income to the state through local resources? Despite the existence of thousands of pastures fields, the state imports meat worth 1300 crores annually from outside. Though Kashmir is the source of water for both the countries of the sub-continent, yet acute shortage of drinking water has forced people in different parts of Kashmir to take out protest rallies against government's incompetence and corruption. The same is the case with the supply of electric power. What is the development actually in the light of what is found on the ground? The number of unemployed people has touched eight laks. In such a state, it is ridiculous to call the construction of a patch of road or raising a building as developmental activity. Thousands of millions of rupees have been spent in the name of cleaning the Dal Lake. Yet the real task in Dal has not been touched on so far. Unless seven thousand families living in and around the lake are removed, nothing by the name of development is conceivable.

The point that we want to make is this: Does the Indian government want that without talking on the core issue of the right of self-determination for the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir it will consider the process of helping the separatists join the general loot in Kashmir and call it constructive politics?

The people are not critical of the administration only. The credibility of the judiciary is at the lowest in their eyes. If the courts issues orders for the release of detainees, these are not carried out. In the case of Shabir Shah, the High Court twice issued orders of his release. But instead of releasing him, he was re-arrested by indicting him in other fabricated cases. But when the Chief Minister ordered his release, he became a free man and was not indicted in any other case. This is not an isolated case. There are numerous examples in which the orders of are floundered. If a police or a civilian officer desires a certain detainee to be released, it is done without delay. If this is the credibility of the judiciary with the people, evidently they will have no trust in the administrative apparatus. When the people lose their faith in the judicial system, the fate of the state is self-explanatory.

Much blood has been shed in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In Pakistan and India also much blood has been spilt in the name of Jammu and Kashmir. These two countries remain hostages to Kashmir issue. There could be any mishap like the Mumbai attacks when the two countries, incidentally both of them atomic powers could become catalysts to destruction of the sub-continent on a very wide scale. In view

of this during and after the talks are conducted, many questions remain to be answered.

1. Will the rulers of Indian bring about an amendment in the Constitution of India by virtue of which calling Jammu and Kashmir as inseparable part of India will be stopped?
2. In a resolution unanimously passed by 541 members of the Indian parliament, it was stated that Gilgit, Baltistan and Azad Kashmir are part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir which is the integral part of the Indian Union. It demanded Pakistan to immediately vacate Gilgit, Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Has the government sought the nullification of this resolution and has it sought a new mandate from the current parliament for talking about self- determination of the State of Jammu and Kashmir?
3. Will India be able to find a solution to the problem just by talking to the leaders of the state only while Pakistan remains one party to the issue?
4. No solution of the Kashmir issue is possible without the participation of the people of Azad Kashmir, Gilgat- Baltistan and Pakistan.
5. What is the meaning of holding talks without announcing the agenda for the dialogue?

Previously also there have been bilateral talks with various political groups in Jammu and Kashmir including the outstanding leader Shiekh Abdullah. There have been agreements as well. But all these exercises ended in smoke. History recalls that bilateral talks between Nehru and Liaqat Ali had also been conducted at one time. In Tashkent, Ayub Khan and Lal Bahadur Shastri also met and talks between Indira Gandhi and Z.A. Bhutto were held in Shimla. Mian Nawaz Sharief and Atal Bihari Bajpai met and talked in Lahore and in Agra Pervez Musharraf and Bajpai had also met. The result of these bilateral talks is before us. These failed because the first party in the dispute and that is the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir were not included.

Now we hear that talks between the Indian authorities and some local Kashmiri political groups are on the cards. The parties have been meeting occasionally. We are aware of the results of these talks. A couple of years back, some exchanges took place between the Hurriyat (Omar Farooq group) and the representatives of the Union government. These also ended in a fiasco like earlier and other talks. Therefore keeping this reality and the truth in mind without drawing the agenda for talks and without converting it into trilateral talks no bilateral talks will be successful. Isn't it just wasting the time?

The question is that of the separatist groups. When the agenda is not declared, one wonders what will have the participant groups to talk about in the course of their meeting. Except for a couple of groups who support independent views, all the rest being the affiliates of the two factions of the Hurriyat are in favour of accession to Pakistan. Their question is this: Is India prepared to speak to them on their political stand of accession to Pakistan and independent Kashmir? If Indians are not prepared for that, then these groups would leave aside the question of accession to Pakistan and independence but will talk on subjects like Indian army returning to barracks, withdrawing black laws like AFSPA, dismantling bunkers and releasing the prisoners. But then the PDP, too, has been making same demands.

Assuming that Indians accept these demands, the question is does the nature of Kashmir issue change anyway by the Union Government's acceptance of these demands? There is another question. Will Kashmir issue be represented by pursuing Hurriyat (Omar Farooq) and a couple more political groups to participate in the talks? The other faction of Hurriyat led by Geelani and some militant organizations has declined to participate. Will the few groups be representing the people of the State? There may be some groups with identical thinking but they do not enjoy the status of being the representatives of the people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

We would like to give sincere suggestions to the Indian rulers. They should not concentrate on the policy of marking time and avoiding direct dealing of core issues and avoiding the embarrassing situation. They need to demonstrate their sincerity in finding a solution to the Kashmir tangle. Present Indian Prime Minister did hold a round table meet on Kashmir. Looking in retrospect, that, too, was an exercise in futility. The reason is that the decisions taken in Round Table Conference on Kashmir have not been implemented till date.

It is to be remembered that the present Kashmir leadership is fed up with the present political scenario in Kashmir. The people do not want to pass on the burden of Kashmir baggage from their shoulders to that of their sons and progeny. Like people in the rest of the world, they too want their future generations live a happy, prosperous and peaceful life. This is the reason why the leadership here does occasionally adopt the path of dialogue. However, unfortunately, the Indian authorities, instead of showing respect to their sentiments try to put them to humiliation in front of their own people. This provides space to the extremists to assume the leadership of the people.

Recently the Libyan leader Muammar Qadafi said that Jammu and Kashmir should be made an independent and sovereign state. The Libyan leader has always supported the demand of Kashmiri people for their right of self-determination. This being the case, the question is how much weight does the Libyan perception carry on international plane. His statement has a background.

During the days of Z. A. Bhutto, late K.H. Khurshid made an effort and induced Col. Qadafi of Libya to make a proposal to Bhutto. The proposal was that the State of Jammu and Kashmir including Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan be made an independent sovereign state to be recognized by Pakistan, China and the Muslim countries. The independent and sovereign state would conclude defence agreement with China and Pakistan. A proposal of this kind would have been the forerunner of the independence for the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. In this situation, India would not have the opportunity to propagate on diplomatic level and within the country that Pakistan wants to grab the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In this scenario, the independent and sovereign state of Jammu and Kashmir could project its claim of legal, moral and social inheritance on international level.

But Pakistan, despite being in possession of 35,853 square miles of the J&K territory, declined to let Gilgit and Baltistan be part of the contemplated independent and sovereign state of Jammu and Kashmir. The result of Pakistan's rejection of integrating Gilgit and Baltistan into a proposed independent and sovereign State of Jammu and Kashmir was that the question of self-determination of the people, which in all probability, would have assumed international dimension, and was reduced to a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan.

With regard to China, after long silence, it has counseled both the countries. At the same time China has played a new gimmick. Its embassy is issuing visa to Kashmir's on a separate paper thereby trying to tell them that China recognizes their separate identity. It is surprising that we Kashmir's became euphoric on China's changed stand without delving deep into their nuances. The tragedy is that our leadership has not trained the nation to assess things and situations on the basis of logic, pragmatism and the facts. Instead, it has let sentiments and personal aggrandisement become the supervening factors.

China's main problem is Tibet and the Dalai Lama. This religious leader is immensely popular not only among his people but among vast sections of people within China also. He enjoys great respects and dignity in the whole world including India as a great religious leader. China does not

feel comfortable with the Dalai Lama's activities.

Apart from this, China is in illegal possession of eleven thousand square miles of the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. India is emerging as China's biggest rival in trade and commerce not only in the Asian continent but in the whole world as well. Therefore exploiting the weak points, China wants to settle her border dispute with India in Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet. If China and Pakistan were our selfless friends in our struggle for the right of self-determination instead of aspiring for our territory, they had only one way to drive India to wall. We mean to say that the way shown by late K.H. Khurshid. Gilgit, Baltistan, Azad Kashmir and the territories occupied by China needed to be consolidated and amalgamated to form the independent and sovereign state to be got recognized by the world powers. The fact is that the territory of Jammu and Kashmir occupied by China and Pakistan is larger than the one occupied by India. Nearly 45024 square miles in the occupation of the former and only 41342 square miles are under the occupation of India. Had Pakistan agreed to this proposal, India would have found herself embarrassed by the international opinion which would have gone in favour of Kashmir's.

I would like to tell the rulers and intellectuals of India that the conditions in Pakistan will not remain the same what we find today. The people and the army in Pakistan will steer clear from present crisis. In the aftermath Pakistan-based militant organizations and the remnants of the Taliban will make Kashmir their target. Taliban are in making in many orphanages and seminaries in Kashmir. There are four hundred of these institutions in Srinagar district alone where inmates are not having even basic necessaries of life. Is it not the responsibility of the government to provide good education, good society and good future to these children? Unfortunately the caretakers of the State cannot have the farsightedness to think of future. The impression gone deep into the thinking of the local people is that a major portion of billions of rupees given by the Indian government in the name of development of the State is being siphoned off to the coffers of the rulers and authorities in this State. Indian leaders and its governing apparatus know it fully. But instead of creating an accountability mechanism to stem the rot, they are covertly allowing it to grow with the sole purpose that the mainstream political parties in the State lend their support to the stand of New Delhi. This is not today's story but has been there for last six decades. By succumbing to the blackmail of so-called mainstream political parties, India gave enough reason to the people of Kashmir to suspect their intentions and thus got alienated.

29 Oct 2009

In Memory of late Dr. Farooq Haider

Dr. Farooq Haider passed away in Rawalpindi on October 16, 2009 after prolonged illness of two years. From God Almighty we come to God we return.

He had shifted with his family from Jammu in 1947, to settle down first to Sialkot, and then to Rawalpindi. His elder brother Ajaz Haider had attained martyrdom in 1947. His elder brother – in – law Allah Rakha Sagar was a prominent leader of Muslim Conference

Dr. Farooq Haider had obtained MBBS degree from Inter Medical College Multan and had began privet practice. In October 1969, I travelled from-Peshawar to Rawalpindi in a rail car in the company of Maqbool Bhat the Martyr. We carried some big vegetable baskets with us. A family received us at Rawalpindi railway station. A curious thing of this event was that the receiving family took the vegetable baskets from us and stuffed these in their vehicle while we took a taxi and headed to the house of Dr. Farooq Haider on Peshawar Road.

I was introduced to Dr. Farooq Haider although it was he who had come to receive us at the railway station. Later on, I came to know that the huge baskets were actually filled with ammunition for NLF, which we carried all the way from Peshawar to Rawalpindi. I also introduced to Javed Sagar alias Koki, the son of Allah Rakha Sagar.

This was my first introduction to Dr. Farooq Haider. At that time I was aged 15 or 16. We halted at Dr. Farooq's residence, which stood just opposite to his present house on Peshawar Road. Later on, I, together with Maqbool Bhat the Martyr, paid a couple of more visits to Dr. Farooq.

In 1970, I had for the first time crossed the border. I had instructions from Bhat Sahib that I should land at the house of Dr. Frooq Haider in Rawalpindi. Three days later, Bhat Sahib joined us in the house of Dr.Farooq. They took the decision of giving me arms training. One retired Subedar named Yar Muhammd was entrusted to provide training to me. During the period of training I put up in the house of Dr. Farooq Haider. I began my life there like a family member. Dr. Farooq and his family kept

me like their youngster. I was very affectionately treated. Whenever they visited any family of their relatives or friends they took me with them. Dr. Farooq's wife Madam Iffat always treated me like her son.

There I met with many leaders of Plebiscite Front and NFL like Amanullah Khan, late Mir Qayum, Sardar Rashid Hasrat, G.M. Mir, Ghulam Mustafa Alvi, and Khaliq Ansari. Once we were assembled at breakfast table. Those present were Amanullah Khan, Javed Sagar, Dr. Farooq Haider, Maqbool Bhat the Martyr and I. Radio Pakistan broadcast the news of Eritrean commandos attacking Ethiopian ship. Reacting to it either Dr. Farooq Haider of Maqbool Bhat exclaimed that we too ought to undertake some such adventure so that Kashmir issue does not only come into focus on intentional level but is also exhumed from the graveyard of Tashkent. He said that the stigma inflicted by Pakistan on us the Kashmir's after Indo-Pak war of 1965 that Kashmir's had connived at getting the Pakistani mujahids arrested has to be washed off once forever.

This was the theme of the debate. It was decided that instead of launching an attack, an Indian airplane in imitation of the example of Palestinian heroin Leila Khalid. It has to be noted that till that day it was only this Palestinian heroin that had skyjacked an aircraft. Maqbool Bhat, the Martyr asked me if I would be willing to undertake that mission. I agreed without a second thought.

In this plan, Farooq Haider's role was more prominent because his brother in relation namely Javed Minto had served in Pakistan Air Force and was now retired. I was introduced to him one day and he began to impart training to me. The course began first with paper work and long lectures. Twice or thrice he sent me along with Javed Sagar to Chaklala airport (now Military Air Force). A Fokker friendship aircraft was standing on the tarmac. In those days almost all airlines used to engage the Fokker Friendship, an aircraft manufactured by Dutch company. I was led to the cockpit of the aircraft and briefed about compass, wireless and other instruments. I was made to understand the procedure of the functionality of these instruments.

In the house of Dr.Farooq Haider I met a sincere and highly dedicated person, namely Naseer Ahmad Wani. For two months and a half, each day when Dr. Farooq Haider would leave for his clinic in the morning he would invariably ask me if I needed anything. During that period, Dr. Farooq Haider, Maqbool Bhat, Javed Sagar and I together visited Mirpur and stayed with Abdul Khaliq Ansari. Whenever we travelled to Muzaffarabad, Balakot and Faraan Valley, it was Dr. Farooq Haider who

drove the vehicle. Often Maqbool Bhat would ask him to sing him a song while driving; Dr. Farooq obliged. One much liked song was:

Apne liye jiye to kya jiye
Tu ji aye dil zamane ke lie.

The other song was:

Ay mere piyare watan
Ay mere bichdhe chaman
Tu hi meri arzu tu hi meri abru

Dr. Farooq used to sing in such a sonorous voice that even Bhat Sahib's eyes would become wet.

The truth is that Dr. Farooq Haider spent his life in full conformity with the contents of these two songs.Although a staunch supporter of independent Kashmir, Dr. Farooq equally helped and befriended even those who were not supportive of the concept of independent Kashmir. His clinic was meant for the poor and destitute Kashmir's and he never demanded anything from anybody. Not only that, he would extend all possible help to the needy.

Dr. Farooq Haider was arrested in connection with Ganga sky jacking case along with hundreds of Plebiscite Front and NLF activists. He was brutally tortured and I reproduce below some extracts from his letters in this connection. On June 5, 1971, he wrote a letter for G.M. Mir and me from Shahi Fort where he remained interned. This letter was smuggled out from Shahi fort where I also remained imprisoned and G.M. Mir was detained in Dalai camp Muzaffarabad. This letter had come to the hands of a colleague of ours. Its extracts ran as this:

" I have lost all hopes of survival. The Police has lashed me again and again and given me electric shocks. I lay unconscious for several weeks. Police wanted me to depose against Maqbool Sahib and Hashim Sahib. I was told that Javed Sagar had been shot dead by some unknown assailant... "

On 22 March 1972 he wrote another letter addressed to Abdul Khaliq Ansari. It was written from Kit Lakhpat jail. I give below some extracts from that long letter. He said:

" Ansari Sahib, I have decided to name myself Indian Agent. There can be no better certificate than this allegation if we want to be faithful to this country (Pakistan). Human beings endure tyranny and oppression. I am also made of flesh and bones like anybody else. But there have been occasions for me in this prison when a man, deeply frustrated and disappointed seeks the angel of death who also fails him. Hanging by feet, lashing and giving electric shocks is the normal practice of torture in this prison. Have you heard of the cages of lions and snakes and spiders where sugar is rubbed on the legs of a man and then he is left to be eaten up by ants? The superintendent who hides under the table on haring the slightest voice of Javed Sagar becomes a Pharaoh when attended by his 20 subordinate policemen. I don't know what have you placed in our souls so that the more the darkness deepens the brighter it shines. Once an electric shock given to me was longish one and it made me tremble with my head lurching backward. My tormentor said that Emperor Akbar had brought the wooden slippers placed on the roof from Kashmir. I told him that these bars had supported his prison house for centuries and now they propose to set them on fire. He said that Kashmir's were always agents and this was our profession. I told him that if the snow from the peaks of the mountains of my land stops to melt, your mothers' breasts will dry up for milk. Ansari Sahib, there is a difference between others and me. My daughters had the good fortune that Bhat Sahib blessed them by putting his hand on their heads and my daughters and wife used to lay the table for Hashim Sahib. The sun of freedom had dawned from my house. Police was in possession of a letter of my sister to Hashim in which she had made a mention of arms in coded language... "

In the jail he wrote a poem titled "*Jesus*" (spy). It became popular. He had been addressing the military regime of General Yahya Khan. I can recollect some portion of it:

Tum piyale bharo to muhibb-e wtan
Ham apna lahu den to jasus hain
Tum Padma jalakar muhibb-e watan
Ham Ganga jalayen to jasus hain

The reference to filling the cups (*piyale bharo*) is to the drinking bouts of Pakistani military ruler General Yahya Khan. Padma in second verse refers to the river Padma in Bangladesh whose water was turned red by the blood of hundreds of thousands of Bengalis massacred by the Pakistani military under General Yahya.

I remember that in 1972, Dr. Farooq Haider's wife Baji Iffat and his two

daughters came to see me in Kot Lakhpat jail. Newborn Sultan, the infant was in her lap and he is today's Dr. Sultan Haider. During my long imprisonment, the family of Dr. Farooq Haider kept visiting me in jails far away from Rawalpindi.

After my release from jail in 1980, some miscreants tried to create differences between Dr. Farooq Haider and me. In 1981, my mother came to see me in Pakistan after a long time of separation. Dr. Haider and his wife came to Peshawar to see her. It spoke for their large heartedness. They took me to Rawalpindi along with them

At that point of time Plebiscite Front had imposed ban on NLF and Maqbool Bhat was in Tihar jail. In 1982 Amanullah Khan came to Pakistan from London and talked about founding Liberation Front. A ban had been imposed on NLF. Plebiscite Front had fallen into inertia. Leaders like Advocate Manhas, Farooq Sheikh, Sayed Nazir Gilani and I gathered at the residence of Dr.Farooq Haider. We laid the foundation of Liberation Front for Pakistan, Azad Kashmir and Occupied Kashmir. Dr. Farooq Haider was made member of central committee and the treasurer as usual. I was made the first chairman of the executive committee of the Liberation Front.

I was putting up in a rented house in the satellite town of Rawalpindi. When the matter of my marriage came up, I shifted to the house of Dr. Farooq Haider. He and his family members were full participants in my marriage ceremony. I was carried as bridegroom from his house to Peshawar. The marriage feast called *walima* was also hosted at the residence of Dr. Farooq Haider. Incidentally, the marriage party of Yasin Malik also departed from his house.

Dr. Farooq Haider's relations with the people or with those going from here were not restricted to organizational sphere only. He was a patronizing father, a kind brother and a sincere friend. His wife performed the role of a kind and loving mother and sister. People called his house as Kashmir House. There is hardly a politician of Jammu and Kashmir who has not partaken food with Dr. Farooq Haider at his house. Most of the meetings of NLF and JKNLF were held at his residence. The credit of this, first and foremost, goes to his wife Iffat Baji.

Dr. Farooq Haider's clinic was destroyed in a powerful bomb blast in 1993-94 in which some people got killed and others wounded. Dr. Haider's eldest son, Dr. Sultan Haider had a narrow escape. It was rumoured that this bomb blast was the handiwork of Indian agents.

Dr. Farooq Haider never coveted political power and status. He could have very easily become a member of Azad JK Assembly and a minister. He had the gift of convincing his counterpart in a serious debate. If he differed with anybody it was on the basis of principles and never gave place to personal differences. On personal level, he had maintained good relations with a vast number of people. He made many financial and physical sacrifices for the freedom of Kashmir. Torture in the jail had not inflicted wounds on his body only but on his soul as well. His wife stood by him till the last moment. Whenever I imagine of Kashmir freedom movement and the house of Dr. Farooq Haider running without him, I shudder. In my last long telephonic talk with him, he reiterated his desire that all freedom fighting groups should unite under one banner. He talked to Yasin Malik also in this context. We shall be paying sincere homage to Dr. Farooq Haider only when we fulfil his wish. Only then shall his sincerity, dedication, struggle and sacrifices become immortal.

May God Almighty give him place in paradise? May God give patience and forbearance to his wife Baji Iffat, his son Dr. Sultan Haider, Shanu, Aeza and Maniza and all his friends and near ones to bear the loss (Amen)? Let me conclude this tribute with two verses which Dr. Farooq Haider had addressed to Maqbool Bhat on latter's martyrdom:

Main jhut ke suraj se nahin laya hun kirnen
Main noor-e sadaqat ke liye khud hi jala hun

12 – 18 Oct. 2009

The truth about the Ganga hijacking

Khalid Hassan

It is thirty-two years since the Indian Airlines flight that had taken off from Srinagar on the morning of January 30 for Delhi was hijacked and brought to Lahore by two young Kashmir's cousins, Hashim and Ashraf Qureshi. The official Pakistani story has been that the Ganga hijacking was elaborately planned by Indian intelligence to be used as an excuse to ban Pakistani aircraft flying over India in order to keep its beleaguered garrison from being supplied. Hashim and Ashraf were denounced as Indian agents, although when they brought the plane to Lahore they were greeted as heroes and freedom fighters.On a popular level they continued to be seen like.

I was at the time a reporter working for *The Pakistan Times* and just happened to be at Lahore airport when the plane landed. In the first few days, there was no bar to us walking across the tarmac and talking to the two hijackers. Later, however, our access was blocked. I was also present when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto arrived from Dhaka. A crowd had gathered at the airport. And many among them had jumped over the railing to greet the PPP leader. I was already on the tarmac. They wanted Bhutto to go towards Ganga. Bhutto said to me, "Look, I don't know what this is all about and who these people are, so I won't say anything." He was practically pushed towards the parked aircraft by the crowd. He exchanged a few words with the two young men.

The late Aftab Ahmed Khan was then head of the India desk at the Foreign Office and had remained in Lahore throughout the episode. He also briefed the press where we subjected him to some hard questioning. Years later in London I asked him about Ganga. He said it had been set on fire by the ISI. On the day that happened, he told me, he was

disallowed access to the plane. Even the West Pakistan chief secretary, Afzal Agha, a Srinagar Kashmiri, could not get through. Both Hashim and Ashraf were later tried and sentenced, the special court having found them to have been "Indian agents".

My cousin KH Khurshid appeared as a witness in that case. His testimony which I saw for the first time a few days ago sheds new light on this strange event and separates truth from the falsehood in which it has so far been kept wrapped by the Pakistani establishment. Khurshid, who was personal secretary to the Quaid-e-Azam from June 1944 until the Quaid's death in 1948, told the court that he had arrived at the airport on February 2, 1971, at about 7.00pm having been told that the situation was tense and that PIA had stopped its daily supply of food to the hijackers.

The late Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front (JKNLF) leader Maqbool Butt arrived in Lahore from Peshawar. Muslehud din, who was working for PTV News, and I were the first people to meet him and we briefed him about the situation. We also helped arrange his press conference at the Hotel International. The hijackers Hashim and Ashraf had asked to meet Butt. Sardar Abdul Vakil Khan, the SSP of Lahore, took Khurshid and Maqbool to a room where Hashim sat with some officials. He told Butt that "these men" were telling him to set fire to the plane. Butt said that would be unwise.

As Khurshid and Maqbool were being escorted out, the SSP said, " *Khuda ke liye hamari jaan chhorh do, jahaz ko urha do"* [For God's sake spare us and destroy the plane]. And that is what happened, but not at the hands of the hijackers.

After the destruction of Ganga, the two hijackers were taken away. In the next few days, Maqbool and the entire leadership of JKNLF was arrested and tried for "treason". All these brave and innocent men remained in jail for two years and were finally released by the Lahore High Court which called them "patriots fighting for the liberation of their motherland". However, Hashim was not released until 1980 and only after he won his appeal in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

While Ashraf stayed on in Pakistan, Hashim settled in Europe. He returned to India a couple of years ago and was arrested for the 1971 hijacking. What kind of an "agent" then was Hashim Qureshi who was jailed by both India and Pakistan?

In my view, it establishes that he was a Kashmiri patriot. The theory that India arranged the hijacking because it wanted to ban Pakistani over-flights makes no sense as India could have banned the over-flights anyway by merely saying that the Yahya regime was ferrying troops and arms to crush the people of East Pakistan – which it was - and India did not wish to be party to it. Hashim had crossed into Pakistan a couple of years earlier and met Maqbool. When he was crossing back, he was picked up, interrogated and released. One Indian account says he "confessed" that he had been trained by Pakistan to hijack an Indian plane and agreed to become a double, another story that makes no sense. You don't need "training" to hijack a Dakota, just a toy gun which is what the two cousins had when they hijacked Ganga.

Another cock and bull story floated by MB Sinha, a former Indian intelligence officer, in a book said that Hashim agreed to "hijack" an Indian plane to Pakistan, befriending Maqbool Butt and infiltrating JKNLF.

This is absolute nonsense because the total JKNLF cadre could be counted on the fingers of one hand. If that was all India wanted, it could simply have sent an agent or two to Pakistan instead of getting one of its own planes hijacked. According to Sinha's book, Hashim was instructed not to hand over control of the plane to Pakistan but to insist that he would only do so if Bhutto came to meet him and his comrade. This, says, the author with a rather rich imagination, was to establish his credibility with "his Pakistani masters and help India at the same time". This is another ridiculous claim because first, Hashim never made any such demand and second, Bhutto's meeting the hijackers was accidental. Sinha goes on to say that Hashim was instructed to blow up the plane after meeting Bhutto, which is utter rubbish because the plane was blown up not by Hashim, who had no means of doing so, but by the ISI.

In April 2001, Hashim Qureshi wrote to a Jammu newspaper after it

published a fanciful article about the Ganga hijacking that he was and remained a Kashmiri patriot working for an independent Kashmir. He quoted KH Khurshid in his defence. Why did Yahya's military destroy the plane? Because by then it had decided to jettison East Pakistan and also because it was inept beyond belief with some very strange notions.

Hashim, who has since been released, has turned pacifist but he still believes that Kashmir should be independent of both India and Pakistan, a position no patriotic Kashmiri differs with. It is time Kashmir stopped being treated as a choice piece of real estate by the two states.

Friday Times, Lahore, Pakistan.
April, 11/17-2003-Vol: XV. No

Return of trust and hope
ADITI BHADURI

For the widows and children of Kashmiri militants, who are beyond the reach of government schemes, the Maqbool National Welfare Association offers a chance to start afresh.



Foundation for a new life: At one of the MNWA training centres

The day had started early for Adil and Zubeir, 10-year-old twins. They were not too sure what the occasion was but they knew that they were going all the way to Srinagar. Many people would be gathered there and they were going to recite poetry they h ad been memorising for days on end. But, most importantly for them, there were prizes to be won! They washed themselves with extra care, dressed up in their best clothes and then together with their grandfather made their way to the Shere Kashmir Park in Srinagar, all the way from Uri.

The day had also begun early for Asifa Jan that day. She too was excited — she was going to speak before a large audience on the present status of women. She had been rehearsing her five-minute speech for a long time now. Speaking in English was not easy for her, it made her doubly nervous, but she was excited. Unlike Adil and Zubeir however, 16-year-old Asifa knew why she was going all the way from Khanabal to Srinagar, instead of to school.

A different congregation

The day in Srinagar dawned crisp and clear, with just a nip in the air. And Shere Kashmir Park, usually accustomed to seeing political rallies and meetings, saw a very different event. It was the bi-annual convention of the Maqbool National Welfare Association (MNWA). Set up in 1994 with the specific aim to assist victims of militancy in Kashmir, MNWA has an interesting history. It is the brainchild of Hashim Qureshi — yesteryear's hijacker, turned today's philanthropist and activist. Since fact is stranger than fiction, Qureshi, during his tenure in a Pakistan jail after the hijacking, underwent a change of heart and renounced violence. At the same time he "could not bear to see his beloved Kashmir bleed and do nothing" and so MNWA was born.

The first MNWA centre was established in 1994. Qureshi, then in exile in the Netherlands, had come down to Kathmandu and people from Kashmir adhering to his ideology joined him there and MNWA, named after Maqbool Butt, whom Qureshi considered his guru, was established. In a place where NGOs have mushroomed by the dozen, MNWA was one of the first ones to be established for dealing with victims of the conflict — widows and orphans from the families of militants, who were not eligible to receive government aid. Qureshi could not understand why these people had to suffer. Rarely did a militant seek his wife or children's permission to become one. However, MNWA's mandate was not just to help these victims, but to empower them with knowledge and skill.

Beginning small

Initially, it was Qureshi's friends and family who were involved with MNWA. The first three centres were opened in downtown Srinagar — which had been a hotbed of militancy and subsequently had many widows and orphans. The centres taught the women it enrolled, after carefully screening their background, the art of making curtains and cushion covers. Qureshi and his family were also the first ones to buy the products.

Today, the MNWA runs centres in almost all the districts of Kashmir and even in Jammu benefiting more than 15,000 women. In turn, some of its beneficiaries are now training others or running successful enterprises on their own. Thirty-six-year-old Shehzada is one such entrepreneur. Her husband was a militant who had worked with the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). One evening in 1995, her husband was shot dead near their house. Semi-literate, with hardly any exposure beyond home and hearth, she suddenly found herself alone, saddled with two daughters aged two and five, and no income. She approached the JKLF

for help but none came. Since her husband had been a militant, she was not eligible to receive government aid either. At a loss to know how to carry on, she heard about MNWA from a neighbour. Shehzada approached the organisation and today she embroiders beautiful shawls

Photos: Aditi Bhaduri



The bi-annual convention.

and runs her own business. Her daughters' education, meanwhile, I being sponsored by the MNWA.

Diverse efforts

The MNWA's other approach is educating orphans. Adil and Zubeir's father was a member of the Hizbul Mujahidin and died in a shootout. Their mother soon remarried and her new husband refused to accept the twins. Saddled with the twins and no income, their grandfather approached the Hizbul Mujahidin for help but was turned away. He then approached the Hurriyat, who directed him to the MNWA. Today the MNWA pays for the education of the twins.

Then there is Javed from Budgam, the son of a slain militant. The Rajeev Gandhi Association helped Javed study till Class X. After that he was left without any financial assistance. The MNWA helped him get through college and earn a B.Sc. degree. Javed triumphantly announced at the convention that he had recently been appointed a constable in the district police force. Now the MNWA is taking care of the education of his younger sister.

It was to share these stories of empowerment, survival and success, as also to stress the importance of education and women's financial empowerment and independence, that the beneficiaries of MNWA had

gathered that day at the Shere Kashmir Park. For those like little Adil and Zubeir, and even the teenagers present, it was more like a long-awaited picnic — stories were told, poetry was recited, songs were sung, prizes were won, and all followed by a good lunch. But it was their stories that were far more important. The meet gave those numerous women, and some men, gathered there a great deal of confidence in themselves. It raised their self-esteem, reinforced and bolstered their sense of usefulness, both to themselves and to society. These victim-survivors understood that they were not alone, and, above all, realised that there were those who cared. After all, it was not often that they were considered important enough for people to gather to hear their stories. Not common, that their stories, one of the hundreds emanating from the valley, were listened to and appreciated. And stories there were aplenty.

Another tragic story

When in 2001 a militant outfit had issued an edict asking all Muslim girls in Kashmir to wear the *burkha* or have acid thrown in their face, not many had taken it seriously. Certainly not 14-year-old Kulsum. One day, on her way to school without the *burkha*, she had acid thrown on her face, disfiguring her for life. Not only did Kulsum have to cope with the pain and shock, her father died of heart failure on hearing the news. The government sanctioned a compensation of Rs.1.5 lakhs, but the amount is yet to be released. Kulsum does have to wear the *burkha* now, but the MNWA helps her to lead a dignified life by providing her with medical aid and also by training her to earn a livelihood by embroidering and stitching salwar suits.

Spreading out

Though the MNWA was set up with the intention of helping victims of militancy, its mandate soon expanded to include others too, irrespective of religion, caste or political ideology. Balbir Kaur was born into a Sikh family in Anantnag but fell in love with Mushtaque Bhat, a Muslim. She converted to Islam, became Bilkis Begum, married Mushtaque, and was promptly disowned by her own family. Four years after her marriage her husband threw her out, charging her of not being a "true Muslim". Balbir found herself alone, with three children and no money. Neither her family nor the village council came to her help. She turned to the MNWA and since 2001 the organisation has been funding her children's education. For many like her, the MNWA is an "extended family", the convention a "family reunion".

The MNWA has also been helping children from families living below the poverty line, by paying for their education. Asifa Jan is one such recipient of financial help. Simultaneously, she is perfecting her knowledge of crewel embroidery at the MNWA training centre in her locality. The organisation has also been arranging blood donation camps, gifting hampers for the marriage of poor girls, and extending interest free loans to women wanting to start a business. About 200 people are also being sponsored medical aid for chronic diseases like diabetes as well as for trauma and nervous disorders.

The MNWA is fully staffed and manned by women, since it believes that women understand women better and also wants to encourage women to participate in the organisation's work and assume leadership roles. The MNWA today is headed by 24-year-old Anita Kumari, a Kashmiri Pundit.

Kumari's story perhaps best reflects the MNWA's mission. For her, the MNWA has been a place of inner healing and reconciliation. Kumari's family is one of the few hundred odd Pundit families left in the Kashmir valley. Growing up in the midst of the violence — her two uncles were kidnapped and tortured by the Hizbul Mujahidin — left Kumari emotionally scarred. Further physical dislocation and discomfort were caused when, after the Sangrampur massacre of Pundits in 1997, the family was made to shift by the local authorities from their village to the safer confines of Budgam proper. Four families were squeezed in each house, left behind by Pundits who had earlier fled Kashmir. All this bred fear and revulsion in Kumari for Muslims.

The other side of suffering

But at the MNWA, Kumari saw the other side of suffering, a suffering even greater than hers. She saw the people she had come to dislike as grieving parents, young widows, and little orphans. She learnt to forgive, to forget her pain, to reach out to those in greater need, to be friends with those she had feared. The fact that she has also been made the overall head of the organisation, in spite of being a member of the minority community there, has also changed her perspective. Today she feels confident enough to hang a picture of Lord Shiva in her chamber in the office, opposite which hangs a picture of the Kaba. "I did my soul of all rancour. I am able to help people here, this in turn helps me be happier," says Kumari. "For me, this place is like an *ashram*."

The Hindu, 22 july, 2007

Realization – I

Hazrat Ali said "that poor is one who has no sincere friend". I had comprehended this big meaning before I reached adolescence but I felt its intensity when I arrived in Kashmir. Since a long time my good friends flattered me by saying that I could write well and implored me to contribute at least once in a week to the columns of a paper. My avoidance was of no avail and here you find me writing under the caption 'Realization (Ehsas)'. I wish the column continues and provides an opportunity of serving the humanity at large.

Why did I hesitate to contribute to the weekly column? I am political person with a controversial political personality. My thinking might influence the column. We have the right to differ and many of our readers will not see eye to eye with my political thinking. Difference of opinion is important and a positive opposition is unavoidable for the construction of a healthy society. In fact it should be a part of society's evolution. Therefore we must not only tolerate opposition in a positive manner but while creating among younger generations the faculty of differing in opinions and views, we should also create a positive sense of tolerance towards one another.

Readers may ask why I have captioned the column as Realisation (ehsas). I shall elucidate it. Ehsas (realisation) is a word of Urdu language comprising five letters and is the plural of hiss. A loving father brings up his child out of sheer realization. A mother does not nurse her infant in her womb for nine months but out of consciousness she turns in her bed with utmost care. Owing to the arduous process of child birth, God Almighty has placed paradise at the feet of a mother. Out of consciousness a brother and a sister are ready to make for each other. It is this realization that distinguishes human being from beasts, predators, birds and animals. Of course these animals too are gifted with consciousness. A hen fights a kite and a cat fights a dog to protect their small ones.

What is the consciousness that distinguishes human beings from animals and makes them the choicest of God's creation? It is the consciousness of caring not only for those with whom he has blood relation but for other human beings too. It is the consciousness of virtue. Our Prophet said desire for others what you desire for yourself. Those who know me well know that I followed this instruction throughout my life. The link between pain and realization has always hurt me. This realization of pain makes me speak about our disastrous society. I want to bring some facts not only to the notice of our nation but to the entire humanity in order to arouse in people the sense of sympathy. I have heard some say that they are fed up with this nation. Although we are caught up in an atmosphere of despondency in which the sense of pain gets dissolved, yet I have not lost hope. If the people of China could come out of their wretchedness of opium cafes and prostitution dens and become a world power, why cannot the people of Jammu and Kashmir get rid of insensitivity and helplessness in which we are thrown. I shall wait for the response of my readers. I expect them to write to me their honest impressions about various ills that have crept into our society such as corruption, illegal occupation, police excesses, denial of justice, disorder in hospitals, oppression against widows and orphans and such other things. I shall make an effort to infuse responsible sections of society with a deeper sense of realization and when that happens, we shall get rid of oppression. No orphan shall be deprived of education, love or affection. The only condition is that what is reported is factual. Only then can we succeed in creating the proper sense of realization in people.)

September-2003

Realization - II

I saw a boy of about ten, driving a scooter but without a helmet with a grown up man as pillion rider. I stopped them and asked their relationship. The grown up man was the boy's maternal uncle. I asked him why he bore enmity towards a ten year boy who could meet with an accident resulting in his as well as a pedestrian's death. It is enmity not affection.

Those who take small kids in their lap while driving a car and then out of fun ask the kid to hold the steering are also the enemies of their children. In Europe, the US, and other developed countries a person is sent to the driving school only after he or she has crossed 17 or 18 years of age, The trainer's vehicle has an extra accelerator and break controlled by the instructor all the time till the learner becomes perfect in driving skill. Normally a learner has to take at least forty driving lessons to be able to derive. For one hour's lesson the fee is about fifteen hundred rupees. A beginner has also to attend lessons in theory, which may last for 3 to 4 hours each twice a week and at the end the learner has to take examination in theory before he is able to take out the vehicle. He is also taught the traffic rules and when the driving test is taken, the learner has to drive through the streets of the town. In case the learner fails to look into the Back Mirror, or to give way to a pedestrian, the public transport vehicle or the tramway, he is declared a failure. I know a Dutch failed forty times in such a test in Holland, and when he cleared after 41st attempt, his interview was telecast. I talked to a friend about total chaos in all government departments in our state. He made an interesting remark. "If public transport system is set right, and the buses stop only at prescribed stops, and do not over load to the point of suffocation, people will begin to feel that the government has changed," said he. All over the world, including our state, a pedestrian has the right of passage if he wants to cross the road or board a tramway. Here in our city I see women, children and old people standing at the Zebra crossing and waiting for the car or the truck or the motorbike to pass by so that they would cross. There is insensitivity to the extent that the vehicle is not stopped to let the small

boys and girls cross the road. According to international rule that if the child commits a mistake while crossing, the onus will be on the driver of the vehicle only. My three year old child let himself loose of his sister's grip and suddenly ran to cross the street and got a rub against the passing vehicle. His jaw was broken. The driver was not at fault but he had to pay all the medical expenses for my child's recovery. The Pain Money had to be deposited in my child's account. Furthermore, he had to bar any medical expenditure if my boy had any trouble for 16 years.

But we do not allow our younger generation to cross the road for hours. Not only the public transport vehicles but all vehicles must undergo complete ere an accident. Here one finds total chaos. In particular in Mazda vehicles, there is no break light so that the following vehicle driver would get an indication that the vehicle ahead is likely to make a halt. Indicators are absent in 95 % vehicles. Out of four tiers at least two are worn out which could cause a sudden accident. Nobody knows what the large traffic police staff, the IG and Spare doing. Are they not responsible for the safety of the life of ordinary pedestrians and are they not duty bound to ensure checking of the indicators of all vehicles? I made enquiries at the office of Mazda dealers. They said they were unable to meet their expenses because they had to pay the weekly tip money (haftah) to the traffic personnel. Apart from this regular payment, the traffic policemen can ask for additional bribe on one or the other pretext at any time. You don't find any public transport vehicle stopping at any specific bus stop. It may be moving at a speed of 40/50 kms improper order when it may apply the break suddenly in the midway to pick up an odd passenger. A long line of vehicle coming from the rear will come to a sudden stop and then will follow a traffic jam. In absence of break lights there is a possibility of the vehicle coming from the rear striking against the vehicle in front. Public transport vehicles must be made to stop at specific bus stops and the people should board the buses only at these stops. In European countries, buses, trams or trains not only stop at specific bus-stops, but also are seldom late even by the smallest fraction of time. The case is reverse in ou: state. It takes a bus to cover the distance from Lal Chowk to Soura at least one and a half to two hours. Another unbecoming scene in our public transport vehicles is that young men do not offer their seat to the women. I am reminded of what I saw while filling my car at a petrol pump. In a Mazda bus, an old woman clad

in a veil was standing holding the bar to maintain her balance while a few youth hardly 19 or 20 years of age occupied the seats with no qualms of conscience. I could control myself and told them whether they were born of stone.

Traveling in buses has become an ordeal for womenfolk. As a seat is not offered to them, they are obliged to keep standing along with male passengers. Then there is overloading, which makes things much worse for women. May I remind you the people in the west, whom we brand infidels (kafir) have written this on the back of the seats in buses, trams and trains: JA zit ik stand, meaning "You sit and I stand". Twenty or thirty years ago the question of not offering a seat to a woman did not arise at all here in Kashmir. All eyes were fixed on the person who failed to offer a seat to a woman or an elderly passenger in the bus.

A sort of consciousness has to be created among our youth. They need to emphasis that respect has to be shown to women and old persons while traveling in the bus. Smoking in the buses is not only prohibited but is also a cognizable crime. We don't have the moral courage to protest against any passenger smoking in the running bus. During winter, I have often seen traffic policemen tucking their hands in their pockets. Is it not the duty of the traffic department to provide them proper warm clothing to protect them from bitter cold of winter while they stand on the beat to perform duty? Should not the traffic police on duty check the driving licenses of under aged drivers to see whether they have one through the rigorous driving rules or have obtained fake licenses?

I am not waging a campaign against anybody or any department. I wish to revive the civic sense of the people in our state. I would like them to be sensible, responsible, and good citizens. If we do not raise our hand while standing at an odd place in the middle of the road to stop a moving bus and if we refuse to board a bus in which there is no vacant seat, it will bring about a drastic change in our traffic culture. In regard to enforcing proper checking of the vehicles, I hope the IG will give proper directions to his subordinates. Traffic police should misuse their right and duty to enforce traffic rules. Anybody with a bitter experience in this context can write to me and I assure that his impressions will be published in these columns.

Oct-2003

Realization - III

What is the importance of the graves and graveyards for the living? It depends entirely on a sense of realization. For those who oppress the poor, the orphan, and the destitute or those who have no love lost for their parents, brothers and sisters, it is immaterial whether there is or are not a grave and a graveyard. One who is alive and shows full respect to his near and dear ones and to human beings will never tolerate desecration of a grave or a graveyard. A look at the condition of the graveyards in Srinagar gives an impression that the graph of insensitivity among the citizens has touched its depths. How many people are gifted with the supreme quality of sensitivity?

I happened to pass a number of times by the Mazar-e Shohada graveyard in Idgah vicinity in Srinagar. I found young boys playing cricket there and throwing the ball into the graves. With shoes on they trampled over the graves to collect the cricket ball. Once I took a European camera team to the Idgah burial ground. I saw dogs sauntering over the graves. It is our tragedy that we have become insensitive towards the living --- mother, wife or daughter of a martyr. Let us not speak of the dead. The condition prevailing at the Idgah martyrs graveyard is true of other such places as well.

I think Malkhah was the largest burial ground in Srinagar. Now it has a stone wall around it with iron fencing. The grapevine has it that the contract of raising a wall and fence was given by a certain minister to his kith and kin. The scandal involved crores of rupees. Even after this, every other day some schemes of repair and renovation in the structure are undertaken obviously to pocket more money out of it. It is surprising that many constructions and buildings have come up in the area of Malkhah that are illegal. The entrails and all garbage coming out after slaughtering goats are dumped in the Malkhah graveyard. This litter invites innumerable dogs to a feast in the graveyard, and obviously canine dropping is spread all over.

In almost all graveyards in the valley, thorny bushes and thickets grow in

profusion hiding the graves from eyesight. It is reported that these bushes came along with the sheep and goats imported from Rajasthan. They were left to graze in the graveyards and helped produce the thorny bushes. Corrupt and fraudulent people wielding influence have occupied grazing fields (kah charai). Cattle and sheep are usually left to graze in graveyards. Their droppings desecrate the graves and pollute the environment. While comparing graveyards in our state to those in the western countries, one would prefer to die in youth and be buried in their graveyard than to live his place. In western countries, graves are decorated with colourful flowers, lawns and pathways. There is paid staff to maintain the graveyards. Who will not be ashamed when finding the Christian graveyard in the Forest lane to The Bund so well maintained and beautified with flower beds and green lawns? Yet one more addition to all this is that gamblers are found gambling in hideouts among the graveyards in Srinagar city. And if narcotic addicts find no place for a whiff, they make use of some sequestered nook in the graveyard.

Should we remain insensitive towards our departed ones who once loved us and comforted us or whom we fed in our laps? Should not we remove the dirt, beautify their graves by planting shady trees and cultivating beautiful flowers and lawns? Or should we become insensitive and let things be as these are? One way of keeping the graveyards clean and beautified is that those whose dear ones remain buried should contribute each an amount of fifty to hundred rupees a month to the graveyard maintenance committee. It would be advisable to entrust the upkeep and maintenance of the graveyards to the members of the families of professional grave diggers. However the first thing to do is that we should all fix a day for the cleanliness and maintenance of the graveyards. This will inculcate in us sensitivity of our love and affection for the departed dear ones. Our sensitivity or insensitivity is a testimony to our humanism. If we really want to give a proof of our sense of humanism, it must reflect in the upkeep and maintenance of our hospitals, rivers, lakes, streams, health resorts, parks, avenues and graveyards etc.

I would appeal to you to keep an eye on your surroundings and come out of the shell of silence and insensitivity. If you cannot muster courage to protest against wrong doing, oppression, corruption, fraud and calumny, inform me and write to me about the factual position. Nov-2003

Realization - IV

In our childhood, we had learnt that health is a great boon. It is seen so not only in European countries but everywhere on the globe. Sad as it is for my nation, the environs of our motherland Kashmir, despite being the paradise on earth, are striven with filth, disease and pollution.

But I am not one to lose hope because hopes and expectations sustain us. If aspirations are dead life comes to a standstill: it leads to disappointment and that means an end of everything. I have never been friends with people who accept defeat from life. Therefore, I expect only those people to read this column who are not disappointed with themselves and more so not with their nation. Those who fall prey to cowardice, disappointment and wrong actions are habituated to orchestrate one sentence: "There is no remedy for this nation."

Leave aside the remedy for the ills of the nation let us concentrate on the treatment given to the patients in our hospitals. A patient once remarked that if one goes to treat an ailment in our hospitals he returns with ten more ailments. I have heard many stories about the functioning of our hospitals. But I would not accept tell-tale stories unless I experience them myself.

My nine year old child was suddenly taken ill. In SMH hospital he was admitted to the emergency ward. I went to the hospital to see him and found that at least four to five persons stood around each bed on which their patient lay. Despite dust bins at hand, the entire ward was strewn with litter, used covers of syringes and stains of glucose on the floor. On asking the doctor about the cleanliness of the ward, he parried a direct response and instead suggested that I see the CMO. I met the CMO who appeared to me as much unconcerned and mistrusting as his other doctors were. He started discussing the incorrigibility of the people. I said we are responsible for dirtying environs but it is people like he and me who have to teach the people to do the right thing. After all we needed to find a solution. What he told me in presence of other doctors convinced me that we were not only strewing thorns for our people but were leading them to a fatal destination. He told me that our people needed genetic transformation.

I shall not recount what I said in reply. But let me say this that day in and

day out, we repeat that disappointment is heresy. If it is so then why is everybody a victim of this malady? Everybody wants only others to do a job. Half a dozen people make a circle around a patient in a general ward, and even in emergency ward. If a doctor or a nurse wants to reach the patient, he or she has to censure the visitors to do so. Sometimes the visitors turn rude. Therefore the doctors and nurses are loath to hazard an altercation with them: Without enforcing dispersal of unruly visitors, they somehow perform their assigned duty and leave the ward.

Why do we surround a patient in droves? Maybe it is out of fear that doctors do not attend patients properly. It is true to some extent. There is a heavy workload on nurses because for forty to fifty patients there are only four nurses to look after them. This is true of emergency ward and labour room. For general wards, less said the better. Nursing, means service to human beings: it is a pious profession. How sad that we are not showing the respect and dignity to this profession which it deserves. That is why few people opt for this profession.

L.D Hospital has been dedicated to a great personality of Kashmir. But her soul may tremble when entering it. Our future generations take birth in this hospital. But it is a home to fat cats and rodents. Parents are scared lest a fat cat carries away a new born. .I wanted to visit a relative. But without knowing the ward in which she could be, I entered almost all rooms of doctors and nurse whose name plates were suspended outside the door. I enquired from a nurse about the patient. I saw a shed inside the premises of the hospital where visitors/relatives were busy cooking food on gas stoves. Disposed polythene bags and crumbs were littered all over. I thought of undertaking the *jihad* of telling these visitors that this was not a place for opening a kitchen and spreading the dirt around because it could be the cause of spreading infection. I fail to understand why permission is given to them to do cooking on the veranda, compound or the surroundings of the hospital?

Hospital administration has to be held responsible for violation of rules of cleanliness. Dustbins are not provided in sufficient quantity in the hospital. Why should visitors be allowed during prohibited hours? Even emergency wards are not spared this kind of intrusion. Why rules are not enforced? People say that hospitals are hotbeds of corruption. The budget is fully exhausted but the purchases are sub-standard. In one hospital I was stunned to find un-insulated live electric wires hanging by the wall. Scanning costs nine hundred rupees and patients need to buy eight out of ten drugs from open market. Many people, unable to buy medicines, take doctor's prescriptions in their hands and come out on the streets to beg for little money. It is said that 90 per cent medical shops are owned by the

administrative staff and other members of the hospital. These sell medicines pilfered from hospital medical stores. One more inhuman practice reported against hospitals is that the hospital ambulance is allowed to ply within the municipal limits only. It is used only to shift patients from one hospital to another.

If a patient hailing from Srinagar city or outside the limits of the city expires, the mourners are left to the mercy of taxi drivers. One taxi driver demanded one thousand and six hundred rupees from a patient with both legs in plaster to be carried from Barzalla hospital to his home in Aishmuqam, Anantnag. By chance MANWA ambulance appeared on spot, filled gasoline for three hundred rupees and took the patient to his place in Ashmuqam. I know that parents of a 25 year old dead girl were begging the hospital authorities till late in the night for ambulance but without success. I called MNWA ambulance, paid for the petrol from my pocket and the dead body was taken to a village in Shupian.

We have got the habit of attributing all wrong doing to militancy thereby finding an escape from our responsibilities. This is ostrich-like behaviour. We are creating a dangerously contaminated environment for our future generations. What we should have been doing was to stand up like living nations and fight for the protection of our environs and society against all evil and unbecoming things.

Dear readers, I have been writing on a host of themes that I feel are eating into the vitals of our nation such as bank embezzlements, pollution of graveyards, extortion, drying up of water channels and destruction of fisheries, unleashing of oppression, corruption in judicial system and many other things. I find that rot has set in, in our society and I feel it my duty to take on myself the struggle (*jihad*) of eradicating it. I need your support for providing secure social system to our future generations.

Dec-2003

Book Review of my previous book:

Kashmir: The Unveiling of Truth

By
Hashim Qureshi
ISBN-9698449-01-9

"In his latest book ,Kashmir : The Unveiling of Truth, Hashim Qureshi sets out that India and Pakistan are both occupiers of Jammu and Kashmir and that the only hope for peace in south Asia is the Independence of Kashmir. Qureshi analyzes the history of the Kashmir freedom struggle: its roots, its mistakes, its sacrifices, and its hopeful future. An interesting read for all those interested in the Kashmir conflict or South Asia in general"

"Young Hashim Qureshi's spirit for freedom was not dampened by having been put behind the bars. Instead, he became more committed to his cause. In prison, he kept himself busy with reading literature on politics, freedom movements and Kashmir .With the passage of time ,he became more serious-minded and began to better understand the issues relating to the freedom of his motherland, progress and prosperity of her people and the sufferings to which they were subjected .He understand that his motherland has been held a hostage by both India and Pakistan without having any concern for the freedom of her people and their welfare and that all that these two countries are interested in their respective territorial aggrandizement.

Within Kashmir, a vast section of adventurists too had held the common people as their hostage. The foremost is the group that raises the slogan of Jihad on the basis of religion. They have become a source of destroying the age-old communal harmony between the Muslims and the Hindus of Kashmir. At the same time, they have unleashed a reign of terror and oppression on the peace-loving people of Kashmir. There is also the dreadful story of atrocities of severe nature committed by Indian security forces, molestation of women and desecration religious places. No justification is acceptable for perpetrating abuse of human rights in this age of reason. Hashim Qureshi demands that the struggle for freedom should not be turned into a war against the very people and their culture for whose freedom the struggle had been launched. He cites the examples of Palestine and South Africa where after a protracted struggle

for freedom and sacrifices of thousands of lives, the parties ultimately recognized the principle of peaceful coexistence. When Hashim Qureshi examines Kashmir question in the context of Indo-Pak relations ,he arrives at the conclusion that peace and prosperity cannot be brought to the region without conceding the right of self-determination to the people .Maintaining large armies and war apparatus, and perpetually living in a state of antagonism, are some of the factors which create obstacle bitter political antagonism safeguarding the minorities especially in India ,these are some of the conditions which create obstacles in our way to overcome backwardness and communal prejudices. Unless such obstacles are removed democracy cannot be strengthened.

Abid Hassan Minto, Advocate,
Ex-President Supreme Court Bar Association Pakistan,
Lahore. .

Comments;

" On behalf of President Clinton, thank you for writing the book .He greatly appreciates your thoughtfulness in bringing your work to his attention .

[Daniel w. Burkhardt, the White House]

"As a former journalist and as an author I have a profound respect for the power of the written word. As we look towards the beginning of a new century , new ideas ,new perspectives, and new approaches to our society need and deserve careful attention .I know how difficult writing can be ,and I commend you for the time and effort you have invested in your book. Again, thank you for your thoughtfulness and for your support. Please accept my best wishes and hopes for your continued success in the future."

[AL GORE. Vice President ,USA.]

" I appreciate hearing the views of all parties involved in this tragic conflict."

[Karl F. Inderfurth ,Asst.Secretary of State department]

"While I can see contents " great deal" of important background."

[Lord Avebury.]

"This is a subject that interests me greatly." Best wishes.

[Michael Krepon]

" Since violence and bloodshed gripped the once peaceful and tranquil state of Jammu and Kashmir ,a large number of books and literature have been written on the subject. However ,most of these books and literature are of a propagandist nature or merely a compilation of news and media reports. It is refreshing to read "Unveiling Of The Truth" by Mr. Hashim Qureshi , which exposes the underlying deep-rooted political corruption responsible for the turmoil in Kashmir.

The book is well laid out written in plain clear English, intended to touch the hearts and minds of every nationalistic Kashmiri. It goes without saying that " Unveiling Of The Truth" is one of the few books so far written on the subject that has tried to expose the harsh realties responsible for the present suffering in Kashmir.The book should serve as a beacon light for every nationalistic Kashmiri who believes in peace ,freedom and justice for Kashmir.

The book refers to some factual details and documents which a reader will find most fascinating when trying to understand the complexities of the Kashmir issue .For instance the death sentence of Mr. Maqbool Bhat in 1984,shortly following the murder of Mr. Mathre, a diplomat in London can hardly be called a coincidence ?Did the Indian Government execute Mr. Butt for a crime ,which took place thousands of miles away ,that too when he was in Indian prison? These are some of the soul searching questions that the book has tried to answer in an unambiguous manner.

The book is well researched tackling a subject of extreme complexity like Kashmir with considerable analytical powers based on some of his personal experiences."

[Siraj Shah, Kashmir Watch { UK}

"Kindly accept my most sincere thanks for sending me your book title 'Kashmir –The Unveiling of Truth'. Polish astronomer Copernicus published his theory of solar system in 1543 saying that 'the planets and earth moved round the Sun' .Copernicus theory challenged the hitherto undisputed Ptolemy ,that 'the Sun, the moon and other planets moved round the earth. Copernicus 'unveiled the truth but it cost him his life liberty and he was thrown in the dungeon .He was accused of blasphemy by the church . His friends did not wish him to die in the prison and encouraged Copernicus to retract and say otherwise. For friends his life and ideas were precious .For the state &Church they were blasphemous.

Friends prevailed and he agreed to retract .When Copernicus was brought in the court he retracted .The court asked him if he had anything more to say. Copernicus said 'yes', and 'but I still believe that the earth moves round the sun.' So Copernicus disappointed his friends and went back to prison and died. It was centuries later that he was claimed as a true Christian. And we know, that Copernicus did unveil the truth. It cost him his liberty and life.

You have attempted an equally arduous task in 1999. I commend your perseverance and wish you well. I wish to add that to understand your book ,one has to clean his or her lenses for a while, need to have a knowledge of suffering of a people, a knowledge of adventure ,a knowledge of prison , a knowledge of torture ,a knowledge of subservient judiciary, a knowledge of loss of home, loss of history , loss of kins and above all an ability to eschew an opinion that does not 'conform' to his or her.

The beauty of the book is that it is not written by a professional for money. It is authored by a son of the soil –who wishes to document facts as he sees them and addresses issues as he visualizes them. I have glanced through and it would be a little while , when I shall finish it and add more to this preliminary response.

There are 'sarkari' writers and 'sarkari readers –who shall read it through their coloured lenses. I hope that you would not be bothered about them and as Dr Krishnan has said that 'faith can move mountains'- your efforts would not go unrewarded.

Your quest for an end to the suffering of the people of Kashmir pre-dates 1990. Most of the past 1990 is a dirty market of dirty second hand stuff. Keep in touch and let us realize that we have to give a meaning to our 'suffering and sacrifices' –which pre-date1990.

Best regards

Syed Nazir Gilani

Secretary General -JKCHR
On UN Register as an Expert in peace Keeping /
Humanitarian Operations & Election Monitoring Missions.

Kashmir: "Freezing To Defreeze"

the flash point

Kashmir issue has become Damocles sword hanging on the heads of nearly 1.35 thousand million people of the subcontinent. Any dangerous event like that of hijacking of an Indian airliner in December 1999 can bring the two countries to the brink of a destructive atomic war. And if that happens, the people of the entire subcontinent will go a century or two back. Apart from that, the future generations will have to bear the brunt of this catastrophe for many centuries to come. The people of the entire subcontinent will be afflicted with poverty, ignorance, hunger and disease. The cause of all this destruction will be the Kashmir issue.

Horrendous scenario

On both sides, precious resources are diverted to stockpiling of arms and preparations for war machine. An ugly turn that this issue is likely to take is that of wrecking the communal harmony and the sentiment of peaceful coexistence of different religious entities in the subcontinent. If religious sentiments of the people of the subcontinent in general and in India in particular, are aroused, and the people are set to cut one another's throat, the results will be only horrible. The world will write us off as human beings. We will be called semi-brutes and beasts and nothing less.

We must know it clearly that if we fight a war on the basis of religion against Indians in or outside Kashmir, then evidently we are doing nothing short of issuing a death warrant against 200 million Muslims of India. We will be playing with the lives, honour, dignity and future of these Muslims. The Kashmir's must make an assessment of the happenings of last ten years. Our achievement during this period is nothing but death and destruction, mutilated bodies and decimated habitats, increasing number of widows and orphans, razing of school buildings to the ground and wrecking of institutions of public utility. Bombs and guns have rent our social structure as under.

In order to restore the dignity of Kashmiri nation, honour and respect of our mothers and daughters, and to restart our lives with a futuristic vision, we need peace and order enabling us to move ahead on the path of progress. We need to enter the new millennium along with other communities and societies. We need to get rid of bomb blasts, gun culture, destructive philosophy and negative approach. Intellectuals in both the countries and also those in Kashmir shall have to ponder over this situation in all seriousness. The question is did the people of India and Pakistan gain anything by prolonged animosity for last half a century? Do human problems get resolved by blasting bombs, firing guns and shedding innocent blood?

A destructive war has ravaged a beautiful country like Afghanistan, and turned it into a heap of rubble. Nuclear bombs, too, have not been able to resolve the differences between the two countries. All that they could achieve through nuclearisation was to keep the pot of dissension simmering. The Kashmir's, too, shall have to come out of a syndrome of sentimentalism and realize that without ideological and intellectual guidance it will be impossible to arrive at the destination. How long are we going to let our generations grope in darkness? We must ask ourselves a simple question: whether by just raising pro-communal slogans and shedding the blood of some innocent people in the name of religion, has any religion been eradicated from the surface of the earth lock, stock and barrelo? In Europe, many wars were fought. But ultimately they realized that there was no escape from peaceful coexistence among people of various faiths.

Responsibility

We the Kashmir's have to take a decision whether we have to remain silent spectators of the ongoing fighting and thus, in the eyes of our future generations, become responsible for their destruction? What happened in Afghanistan? In the name of religion and sect, the Afghans turned their homeland into ruins. Should we expect that those with no qualms of conscience for turning their homeland into ruins will bring us freedom or have the ability of resolving our human problems? Support to this type of thinking will result only in the kind of bomb blasts that happened in Batmaloo in the first week of January 2000. In this bomb blast, along with some security force personnel, no less than 17 Kashmir's were also killed. Imagine the condition of those parents whose dear ones were torn into pieces by this bomb blast. What will be the condition of the parents when they come to collect the severed limbs of the victims of blast. Therefore if we choose to become silent spectators

today, then we are criminals in the eyes of our future generations.

No option but peace

Restoration of peace is of utmost importance in the subcontinent. A solution is needed that would satisfy all the three parties and ensure their honorable and secure life. Staking my thirty-year political career, I would like to make some proposals for bringing immediate peace and relief to the human beings in this strife torn land. I for one am prepared to sacrifice my life for the protection and welfare of the people of the subcontinent and of Kashmir in particular, in order to liberate them from slavery and oppression. I opt for resolution of the issue through peaceful negotiations. I have already been struggling against innumerable odds and have been suffering many humiliations and accusations besides the privation of thirty years of life in exile but reiterating at every stage and every point of time the inevitability of resolving the dispute through peaceful negotiations.

Appeal

I make a fervent appeal to the intellectuals of India and Pakistan that they should muster courage, as I do, and react on the suggestions stated below after giving them due thought. It is their moral duty to impress upon the people holding authority in both the countries to turn away from confrontational postures and address themselves to the Herculean problems of poverty, disease, ignorance, backwardness and economic deprivation afflicting the hundreds of millions of people in the subcontinent.

Proposal for Indo-Pak détente

01 Both India and Pakistan should formally declare their acceptance of freezing the Kashmir dispute for next 20 years beginning with the millennium.

02 Both the countries should send back their regulars and paramilitaries to the barracks in parts of Jammu and Kashmir under their respective control.

03 All armed and unarmed foreign nationals should leave Kashmir forthwith. In order to realize this objective, both the countries should evolve a joint mechanism.

04 Adequate and viable steps are taken to stop extremist religious groups on both sides from indulging in campaigns of communal hatred against one another.

05 People in both the countries should be provided with a very liberal and easy system of obtaining visa for visiting their relatives, friends and kith and kin on both sides.

06 Both India and Pakistan should re-start bilateral dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues. Once Kashmir dispute is frozen, it should not be difficult for them to come to some understanding on the resolution of other issues.

07 India and Pakistan should open bilateral trade as early as possible. It should be supported by exchange of cultural delegations. The two approaches will undoubtedly help overcome the climate of suspicion and hatred that has been prevailing for a long time.

08 Both countries should immediately stop carrying out all antagonistic propaganda against each other.

09 Both the countries should stop supporting terrorist activities on their soil. Additionally, they should take stringent measures to curb the activities of such organizations as are known to be promoting terrorism and violence

10 Both sides should constitute high power committees comprising political and economic experts and renowned intellectuals who will work towards changing the 53-years long mindset of hatred and animosity on both sides and create an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence.

Towards resolution of Kashmir dispute

01 Both India and Pakistan should agree to give maximum quantum of autonomy for twenty years in the first instance to the people in Jammu and Kashmir under their respective control. Only defence, currency, foreign and communication should remain with the two states and all the remaining powers should be delegated to the people in Kashmir. Gilgat and Baltistan and Azad Kashmir should be brought under the ambit of one constituting assembly.

02 All political prisoners in Indian jails should be set free. Both the governments should provide information to the relatives of the people whose whereabouts are not known. People implicated in acts of terrorism and murder, should be brought to the book.

03 A system of liberal and easy issuance of permits be evolved by both India and Pakistan enabling the people on either side of the line of control to cross over and meet their relatives and friends.

04 People who have been driven out of their homes on either side of the control line in the wake of the events and partition of 1947 should be resettled at their places of origin in the State. In particular, people of various faiths like Pandits, Sikhs and Muslims, forced out of their homes during past ten years of turmoil in Jammu and Kashmir, should be brought back to their respective places, rehabilitated and illegal occupation of their lands and properties be immediately vacated. The Muslims of the valley, particularly those in the towns, should form local committees who will visit their Pandit neighbors in Jammu camps and entreat them to return to their places of origin promising them the safety of their life and honour. This is a religious and moral duty.

05 Kashmir's should be given the right of expressing their wishes freely under the guiding principle of non-violence.

06 Kashmir's on both sides should be provided with full support to reconstruct their shattered economy and developmental programs. They should also be supported to rebuild modern educational institutions.

07 A high power commission comprising intellectuals, politicians, economists, technocrats and social experts from India, Pakistan and Kashmir is constituted. Its term of reference would be to prepare the people of all the three regions, psychologically and practically for a permanent solution of Kashmir tangle by inviting viable proposals. The Commission would be entrusted with the mandate of finding a peaceful and lasting solution to Kashmir problem. Endorsement of any permanent solution by the Indian and Pakistani parliaments and the Legislative Assemblies of the two parts of the State of Jammu and Kashmir would be an important condition.

Benefits

01 In the wake of freezing Kashmir issue, a situation of armed confrontation between India and Pakistan would come to an end. The apprehension of accidental war will recede. All armed activities linked to Kashmir dispute will come to an end, which, in turn, would eschew the accusation and counter accusation syndrome between India and Pakistan.

02 In the absence of looming cloud of Kashmir issue, India and Pakistan will be facilitated to resolve their other pending bilateral issues. Easy visa system will help people travel across the line of control without fear and with all freedom. This would gradually minimize and fully remove the atmosphere of mutual suspicion and hatred prevailing for a long time.

03 Entering into trade relations for a period of twenty years would develop a climate of commercial brotherhood. This leads to developing of common interests in each other's welfare and stability. at no cost should such carefully constructed relations be allowed to break.

04 People in the entire region will be relieved of the hanging sword of a destructive war. By diverting huge funds from building military machine to developmental plans, hundreds of millions of people will be delivered from hunger, disease, ignorance and unemployment.

05 Pakistan will get an opportunity of reconstructing her economy and repaying foreign Debts to the tune of 52 billion dollars. India stands to gain by saving the huge military expenditures of Kashmir operation.

06 Kashmir does also stand to gain by agreeing a twenty-year freeze on Kashmir issue. The present state of undeclared war and its disastrous consequences in all walks of life must come to an end. Otherwise it is going to fragment the Kashmiri society and rent its social fabric asunder.

07 In the event of a disastrous war between India and Pakistan, the onus of total destruction of the subcontinent will be brought to the doorsteps of Kashmir's only. It is bound to inflict severe damage to her profile and everything else. We have been impatiently

waiting for freedom of Kashmir not for only 53 years but actually for nearly four centuries in the past. Another twenty-year wait would not be asking too much particularly when such a wait is expected to bring convincing results in train. Allowing the situation to drift the way it is going, undoubtedly means that Kashmir is heading towards fragmentation and ultimate destruction.

08 Those who will be most seriously affected by the ongoing state of things in Kashmir will be none but the Kashmir's. If after giving sacrifices of 40 to 50 thousand precious lives over a period of ten years no Islamic country came to the rescue of Kashmir neither's nor did it hurt the rest of the world, what then is the purpose of continuing a disastrous struggle? Kashmir's have to ponder over this question and decide.

I hope all elements seriously and sincerely interested in calling a halt to the catastrophic situation in Kashmir, will consider these proposals seriously and without sentiment, and make their input in their implementation. This will be a historic service to the cause of promotion of human rights and of preserving and protecting peace in the region. Let us join hands in this noble task. I would like to tell the people of Kashmir once again that I was the first Kashmiri active nationalist who hijacked an Indian airliner way back in 1971. As a youthful Kashmiri, I was also infused with the burning spirit of freedom of my motherland. But that incident opened my eyes and taught me a lesson, which I would have never otherwise learnt. It made me shun violence once for all, and take the path of non-violence for realizing any goal. It made me a humanist and a human rights activist. We shall not achieve anything by taking up arms for a fratricidal war and engineering the destruction of our motherland. Let us turn away from the path of violence and seek peace, security and prosperity of our oppressed people.

Note: Above suggestions about Kashmir Conflict were addressed in The Hague Conference in Netherlands in 1999 and after that we sent it to all institutions all over the world. It was produced by the Chairman in Ford Foundation Conference on regional conflict, Chandigarh.

Honorable President Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500
United States of America
Dated:January 2010

Respected Mr. Obama,

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your historical victory. You indeed have triggered a wave of hope and chance among not only the people of the USA, but also among all the indigent people in the world.

I belong to a beautiful land called Jammu & Kashmir, which has been the stage of conflict from the past sixty years. The impoverished people of Jammu & Kashmir are witness to violence, poverty and bloodshed on a daily basis. These elements have been the root causes of instability in South Asia.

Your recent statement, in which you suggested that the "USA should try to help resolve the Kashmir issue between Pakistan and India", has caused a massive feeling and aura of hope among the Kashmiri people. The Kashmiri people have seen your statement as an monumental change in their lives and have pinned their hopes upon your Presidency and leadership. They appeal to you and hope that you will try to help India and Pakistan resolve this issue by keeping the aspirations of the Kashmiri people at the forefront, as they are the first party to this issue.

I have been struggling for peace and prosperity for the last thirty years and during my crusade for peace I have encountered many hurdles and humiliations. Although I once was born from the womb of violence, I learnt that violence was not the way to achieve political goals. I also learnt that the world did not acknowledge my sacrifices and the fact that I had the courage to leave violence behind and choose a peaceful path. But this has not restrained me from struggling peacefully for a permanent solution to the Kashmir.

The challenging situation in Afghanistan, the deals between governments and fundamentalist and the recent attacks on major cities in India and Pakistan are significant concerns which should be addressed forthwith so that humanity and hope can have a chance.

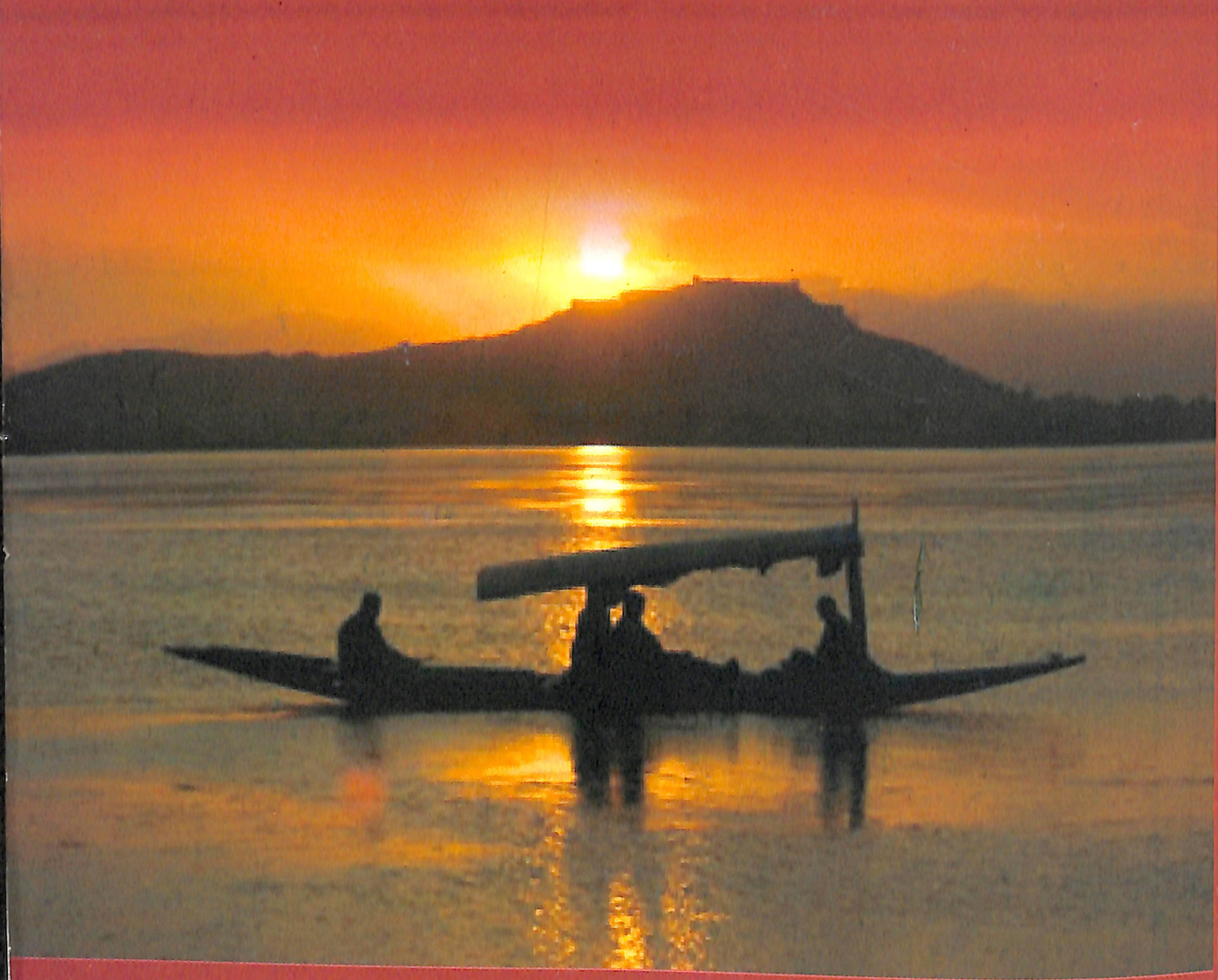
In reference to the above, I would like to invite you to read my attached book, "Kashmir: The Unveiling of truth", which will furnish you with in depth knowledge of the ground situation in Kashmir and the entire region.

Your Sincerely,
M. Hashim Qureshi
Chairman JK Democratic Liberation Party
www.jkdlp.org

Mr.Hashim Qureshi is also one of causalities of truth. He dares to speak truth and it is hard to swallow truth particularly in politics. However unjustified criticism, condemnation and denigration where unable to prevent Hashim from speaking truth. Every one has right to agree and disagree with his views and concept but It will be unjust to ignore Hashims straight forwardness and loyalty to his nation.

I have read few of his articles now in a complete book form; I sincerely believe that Mr.Hashim Qureshi's vision and experience deserve recognition on both political and diplomatic front. Mr.Hashim Qureshi's experience and interaction both at national and international level should not be unnoticed and ignored .He has spent most of his time on working for different solution of Kashmir. His experience and encounter with truth, beyond any doubt needs support and applaud.

(Moulana) Ahmad Khazir



ISBN:978-81-909461-2-4